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# THE SELF IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

K.P. SINHA

### About the Book

This work deals with the concept of the individual self as found in all the well-known systems of Indian philosophy including those of Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Śāktism. To establish any point under discussion, the author has given exhaustive quotations from the original texts. Doubtless, this work will give the readers all the necessary materials for a comparative study of the self in the different systems of Indian philosophy.

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Dr K. P. Sinha passed M.A. in Sanskrit from Jadavpur University in 1963. He obtained the Ph.D degree from the same university in 1968 and the D.Litt. degree from Burdwan University in 1982. Dr Sinha is a devoted researcher in different fields of Indian philosophy. Besides, he is the first exponent of the Bishnupriya Manipuri linguistics.

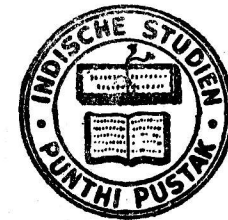
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# THE SELF IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

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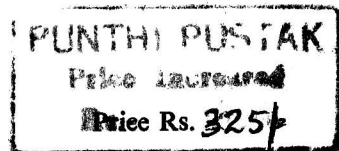
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## PREFACE

The term '*ātman*' or 'self' used in the Upaniṣads and Advaita-Vedānta means both the Universal Self or Brahman and the individual self. But in all other systems of Indian philosophy as also in general usage, the term '*ātman*' without any qualification means the individual self, while the same qualified by some term meaning 'universal'—e.g. '*viśva*', '*parama*' etc.—means the Universal Self. In the present study, I have followed the second trend in the usage of the term '*ātman*' or 'self'.

In this work, I have made an attempt to present the concept of the individual self as found in all the well-known systems of Indian Philosophy, including those of Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Sāktism. While dealing with any point in the course of my discussion, I have always quoted the original texts. I am hopeful that from this work, the reader will be able to make a comparative study of the concept of the self in the different systems of Indian Philosophy.

I am thankful to Sri Sankar Kumar Bhattacharya the authorities of PUNTHI PUSTAK, CALCUTTA, for taking interest in the publication of the work and bringing it out in print with proper care.

Agartala,  
15 August, 1991

K. P. Sinha

## ABBREVIATIONS

BG	=Bhagavad-Gītā
BhS	=Bhagavat-Sandarbhā
BP	=Bhāgavata-Purāṇa
Bṛ UP	=Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad
BS	=Brahma-sūtra
BSA	=Brahma-sūtra-Aṇubhāṣya
BSB	=Brahma-sūtra-Bhāskara-bhāṣya
BSG	=Brahma-sūtra-Govinda-bhāṣya
BSM	=Brahma-sūtra-Madhva-bhāṣya
BSN	=Brahma-sūtra-Nimbārka-bhāṣya
BSR	=Brahma-sūtra-Rāmānuja-bhāṣya
BSS	=Brahma-sūtra-Śaṅkara-bhāṣya
BSSK	=Brahma-sūtra-Śrīkaṇṭha-bhāṣya
BSSr	=Brahma-sūtra-Śrīkara-bhāṣya
BSV	=Brahma-sūtra-Vijñānamṛta-bhāṣya
CC	=Caitanya-caritāmṛta
Ch Up	=Chāndogya-Upaniṣad
IP	=Indian Philosophy ( S. Radhakrishnan )
MN	=Majjhima-Nikāya
MŚV	=Mīmāṃsā-śloka-vārtika
NS	=Nyāya-sūtra
NSB	=Nyāya-sūtra-bhāṣya
NV	=Nyāya-Vārtika
PB	=Pañcārtha-bhāṣya ( on Paśupata-sūtra )
PH	=Pratyabhijñā-hṛdaya
PP	=Prakaraṇa-pañcikā
PS	=Paramātmā-sandarbhā
ŚD	=Śiva-dṛṣṭi
SDS	=Sarva-darśana-saṁgraha
SK	=Sāṃkhya-kārikā
SLS	=Siddhānta-leśa-saṁgraha
SN	=Sāmyukta-Nikāya



SpK	=Spanda-kārikā
SS	=Sāṃkhya-sūtra
STK	=Sāṃkhya-tattva-kaumudī
Śv Up	=Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad
TDN	=Tattvārtha-dīpa-nibandha
TP	=Tattva-prakāśa
TV	=Tattva-Vaiśāradi ( on YSB )
VK	=Vedānta-Kaustubha
VP	=Vedānta-paribhāṣā
VRM	=Vedānta-ratna-manjūṣā
VSS	=Vedānta-siddhānta-saṃgraha
YS	=Yoga-sūtra
YSB	=Yoga-sūtra-bhāṣya.

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## CHAPTER

# 1

## THE SELF IN THE UPANIṢADS

### Nature of the Self

In the Upaniṣads, the term 'Brahman' is used to denote the Absolute, and the term '*Jīva*' or '*jīvātman*', to denote the individual self. The term '*ātman*' is, however, used to mean both the Absolute and the individual self, because the essence or real self of the individual is non-different from the essence of the world i. e. Brahman.

In its real nature, the self is pure consciousness and pure bliss. It is eternal, unchangeable and imperishable. It is devoid of any body and is free from birth and death<sup>1</sup>. It is free from sin, old age, death, grief, hunger and thirst<sup>2</sup>. It is infinite or all-pervasive ; it exists everywhere and pervades everything<sup>3</sup>. It is described sometimes as having the measure of a thumb and sometimes as having an atomic measure. Again, it is said that the self is smaller than the atom and bigger than the big<sup>4</sup>. All this means that the self cannot be measured in any way and that it transcends all the limitations of space. The self is a subject-object-less entity ; it has no object to be known or enjoyed. Accordingly, it is not the doer (*Kartā*) or knower (*jñātā*) or enjoyer (*bhoktā*)<sup>5</sup>. It lies beyond the Law of Karman. Again, the self is unknowable and inexpressible ; it cannot be known by the senses and the mind, nor can it be expressed by words<sup>6</sup>. Being of the nature of pure consciousness, the self is self-revealed and is never enveloped by ignorance. That means, the self is ever free and is never bound in the world. Being of the nature of pure bliss, the self is never subjected to the

joys and sorrows of the world. The consciousness and bliss of the self have no reference to any object i. e. they are not produced by the self's contact with any object.

*Jīvātman* or the individual self means the infinite self conditioned by the body, the senses and the mind<sup>7</sup>. In reality, the self is different from the body, the sense-organs, the mind (*manas*) and the intellect (*buddhi*). The body is the chariot, the sense-organs are the horses, the *manas* is the bridle, the intellect is the driver, while the self lying beyond the intellect is the guide of the whole system. The body is directed by the sense-organs; the sense-organs, by the mind; the mind, by the intellect, and the intellect, by the self<sup>8</sup>. The sense-organs, the mind and the intellect are the instruments by which the self knows, acts and enjoys. Thus, the self is the *kartā* or doer, *boddha* or *jñātā* or knower, *mantā* or thinker and *bhoktā* or enjoyer<sup>9</sup>. It is the experiencer of joys and sorrows accruing from its actions. It exists as the inner controller in the cavity of the heart where from it guides the mind-body<sup>10</sup>.

The self is the constant and unchangeable essence of a being; it is the common factor of a being in all the states of waking, dream, sleep, death, rebirth and liberation<sup>11</sup>. It is the subject of all experiences, and is self-revealed. Yājñavalkya says, "When the sun sets, when the moon sets, when the fire is put out, the self alone is his light"<sup>12</sup>. It means that even when no object exists, the self persists in its own light.

The self does not perish with the destruction of the body. It takes one birth after another and continues through all these births. The Śruti says, "Just as corns wither away and germinate again, so mortal beings die and are born again according to their moral deserts"<sup>13</sup>.

The individual self is encased in five *kośas* or sheaths. The body and the sense-organs constitute the *annamaya-kośa* or the bodily sheath. Within the bodily sheath there is the *prāṇamaya-kośa* or the vital sheath which consists of the vital forces. Within the vital sheath exists the *manomaya-kośa* or the mental

sheath which has the mind as its central principle. Within the mental sheath, there lies the *vijñānamaya-kośa* or the intellect-sheath which has the intellect as the fundamental principle. Within the intellect-sheath there is the *ānandamaya-kośa* or the blissful sheath which consists of pure consciousness and bliss<sup>14</sup>.

The individual self has four states: *jāgrat*, *svapna*, *suṣupti* and *turiya*. The *jāgrat* or waking state is that in which the self knows and enjoys external objects through the external sense-organs. The self in this state is called *viśva* or *vaiśvānara*. The state of *svapna* or dream is that in which the self knows and enjoys the subtle or internal objects by the internal organ or mind. The self in this state is called *taijasa*. The state of *suṣupti* or dreamless sleep is that in which the self exists simply as consciousness and bliss without apprehending or enjoying any external or internal object. In this state the self attains its real nature but is not freed from ignorance. The self in this state is called *prājña*. The *turiya* or fourth state of the self is that in which the self exists as pure transcendental consciousness and bliss freed from ignorance. The self in this state is called *ātman*<sup>15</sup>. This is the real nature of the self which is realised in liberation when the self is totally freed from ignorance.

### The Self and the Absolute

In many passages of the *Upaniṣads*, the individual self is identified with the absolute. The essence in man and the essence of the universe are declared as one and the same. Thus, the *Upaniṣads* say, 'That thou art', 'This self is Brahman', 'All is Brahman', 'I am Brahman', 'One who knows Brahman becomes Brahman', 'He who exists in man and he who dwells within the sun are one' and so on<sup>16</sup>. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* says that 'Sat, the Existent, manifested the universe and



entered into it as the individual self<sup>17</sup>. When man realises his identity with the Absolute, he feels his presence everywhere and finds no distinction between himself and others—living or non-living. Accordingly, in that state there remains no difference between the subject and the object. The Śruti says, "When all become the *ātman*, who will see, smell, taste, hear, speak, touch, think and know what?" "When all this becomes the *ātman*, what will he see with what instruments?" "How can one know the knower?"<sup>18</sup> "There is no plurality here", "One who sees manifoldness moves from death to death"<sup>19</sup>, "He who makes any distinction is haunted by fear, but he who realises identity becomes fearless", "There is no other seer, no other hearer" and so on<sup>20</sup>. In the *Upaniṣadic* view, all differences are created by *avidyā* or ignorance; when ignorance is destroyed by true knowledge, one feels identity with Brahman and also with everything.

There are some passages in the *Upaniṣads*, which seem to speak of both difference and non-difference between the self and the Absolute. Passages which declare the self as a part of Brahman belong to this type. The most important passage of this type runs thus: 'The selves emerge from Brahman like sparks from a blazing fire'<sup>21</sup>. Passages like 'May I enter thee', 'Thou art my resting place'<sup>22</sup> and so on are also to be included in this type. The renowned simile of two birds runs thus: 'Though both the eternal birds rest on the same tree, one of them tastes the fruits and experiences joys and sorrows, while the other does not taste them but simply looks on'<sup>23</sup>. The first bird, being deluded by lack of freedom and sovereignty, experiences sorrows, but when it sees the other bird and its glory, it is freed from misery, is purged of merits and demerits, becomes taintless and pure, and realises its absolute equality with it<sup>24</sup>. Here, the first bird represents the individual self; the second, Brahman, the Universal Self. In this simile, a difference between the individual self and Brahman is admitted, though absolute equality is said to arise at the end. Accord-

dingly, this passage may be regarded as an example of the relation of difference-cum-non-difference between the self and Brahman.

Again, there are some passages in the *Upaniṣads*, which clearly describe the individual self and Brahman as different from each other. Thus, it is said: 'He who controls it (the self) from within', 'Having entered the heart, the Lord becomes the ruler of the creatures', 'The self attains immortality by knowing the inner guide as different from it'. 'The self is dependent and bound', 'The Lord is omniscient and independent, while the self is ignorant and dependent', 'He is the lord of *prakṛti* and the individual selves'<sup>25</sup>, and so on. The significance of all these passages is that the individual self is the doer of actions and enjoyer of happiness and misery, while Brahman is the actions-less witness free from happiness and misery, that the *jīva* is endowed with limited power and knowledge, while Brahman has unlimited power and knowledge, and that the self is the controlled, while Brahman is the controller. Accordingly, the self and Brahman are to be regarded as different from each other.

Of the later commentators, Śaṅkara emphasises the 'identity'-texts and propounds the theory of non-dualism, Madhva puts stress upon the 'difference'-texts and propounds dualism, while Nimbārka accepts both these positions and propounds the theory of difference-cum-non-difference.

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3. mahāntam vibhūm ātmānam—*Kaṭha up*, 1.2.22 sarva-vyāpinam ātmānam—*Śv Up*, 1.6.
4. aṅguṣṭha-mitraḥ puruṣaḥ—*Kaṭha up*, 2.4.13, 2.6.17; *Śv Up*, 3.13; eṣo'ṅur-ātmā—*Muṇḍaka Up*, 3.1.9; bālāgra-śatabhāgasya śatadhā kalpitasya ca. bhāgo jīvaḥ so vijñeyah sa cānantāya kalpate—*Śv Up*, 5. 9; aṅor-anīyāḥ mahato mahīyān—*Kaṭha Up*, 1.2.20; *Śv Up*, 3.20.
5. See 7 and 10 below.
6. naiva vācā na manasā prāptum śakyo na cakṣuṣā—*Kaṭha Up*, 2.3.12.
7. ātmendriya-mano-yuktaḥ bhoktetyāhur manīṣiṇaḥ—*Kaṭha-Up*, 1.3.4; ihaivāntaḥ śarīre somya sa puruṣaḥ—*Praśna Up*, 6.2; see also *Ch Up*, 8.12.3.
8. ātmānam rathinaḥ vidhi.....buddher ātmā mahān paraḥ—*Kaṭha Up*, 1. 3. 10.
9. mantā boddhā kartā vijñānatmā puruṣaḥ—*Praśna Up*, 4.9.
10. ya eṣo'ntar-hṛdyah—*Br Up*, 2. 1.17.
11. svapnāntam jāgaritāntam—*Kaṭha Up*, 2.1.4; yatraitat puruṣaḥ svapiti nāma satā somya tadā sampanno bhavati—*Ch Up*, 6.8.1.
12. astamita āditye yājñavalkya candramasy-astamite śāntégnau śāntāyām vāci kim-jyotir evāyam puruṣa ity-ātmaivāsya jyotir bhavati—*Br Up*, 4.3.6.
13. na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre—*Kaṭha Up*, 1.2.18; anusamīyanti yathākarma—*ibid*, 2.2.7; śasyam iva martyaḥ pacyate śasyam iva jāyate punāḥ—*ibid*, 1. 1. 6; see *Ch Up*, 5. 10. 6-7.
14. *Taittiriya Up*, 1. 1. 5.
15. *Muṇḍaka Up*, 2-7.
16. tat-tvam-asī—*Ch Up*, 6. 16; ayam ātmā brahma—*Br Up*, 2. 5. 9; sarvaḥ khalv-idam brahma—*Ch Up*, 3.14.1; brāhma veda brāhmaiva bhavati—*Muṇḍaka Up*, 2.2.9; yaś-cāyam puruṣe yaś-cāsav-āditye sa ekaḥ—*Taittiriya Up*, 2. 8.
17. anene jīvenātmanā nupraviśya—*Ch Up*, 6. 3. 2.
18. yatra vā asya sarvaḥ ātmaivābhūt tat kena kaḥ jighret...vijānīyāt—*Br Up*, 2. 4. 14; vijñātāram are kena vijānīyāt—*ibid*, 2. 4. 14.
19. neha nānāsti kiñcana—*ibid*, 4. 4. 19; mṛtyoḥ sa mṛtyum āpnoti ya iha nāneva paśyati—*Kaṭha Up*, 2. 4. 11.
20. so'bhayaḥ gato bhavati—*Taittiriya Up*, 2. 7; nānyo' to' sti draṣṭa nānyo' to' sti vijñātā—*Br Up*, 3. 7. 23.
21. yathā sudīptāt pāvakaḥ visphuliṅgāḥ sahasraśaḥ prabhavante sārūpāḥ—*Muṇḍaka Up*, 2. 1. 1.
22. tvā bhaga praviśāni—dhātārāyantu sarvataḥ—*Taittiriya Up*, 1. 4.

23. tayoḥ anyāḥ pippalaḥ svādv-atty-anaśnann-anyo' bhicākaśīti—*Muṇḍaka Up*, 3. 1.
24. paraḥ sāmyam upaiti—*ibid*, 3.3.
25. antaro yamayaty-eṣa ta ātmāntaryāmy-amṛtaḥ—*Br Up*, 3. 7. sarvāṇi ca bhūtāni yo' ntaro yamayati—*ibid*, 3.7.1; pṛthag-āt-mānam preritāraṇ ca matvā juṣṭas-tatas-tenāmṛtatvam-eti—*Śv Up*, 1.6; anīśaś cātmā vadhyate—*ibid*, 1.8; jñajñau dvāv-ajāv-iśānīśau—*ibid*, 1. 9; kṣarātmanāv-iśate—*ibid*, 1.10.

## CHAPTER

# 2

## THE SELF IN THE BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ

### Introduction

In the view of Śaṅkara and his followers, the inconceivable, inexpressible, qualityless, actionless and differenceless Brahman lying beyond the world-process is the Absolute accepted in the *Gītā*, while according to the Vaiṣṇava Vedāntins, the Absolute accepted in the *Gītā* is Puruṣottama who is not merely a qualityless impersonal principle totally dissociated from the world-process but also an infinitely qualified person actively participating in the world-process. To the Śaṅkarites, Puruṣottama is identical with Īśvara, the world-governor who is an empirical manifestation of Brahman, while to the Vaisnavites, Brahman or Akṣara Brahman is an aspect of Puruṣottama.

It, however, seems that the view of the Vaiṣṇava-Vedāntins is more in consonance with the philosophy of the *Gītā*. Puruṣottama cannot be identified with the Īśvara of Śaṅkara-Vedānta, since Puruṣottama has been declared in the *Gītā* as the highest reality, while the Īśvara of Śaṅkara-Vedānta is not so, being a lower manifestation of Brahman. According to the *Gītā*, Puruṣottama being the highest reality is the foundation of Brahman also<sup>1</sup>. Puruṣottama and Brahman are, of course, not two distinct realities nor two stages of the same reality, but are two aspects of the same reality. Puruṣottama devoid of qualities and actions is Brahman, and Brahman endowed with divine attributes is Puruṣottama<sup>2</sup>.

Puruṣottama has two-fold *prakṛti* or nature, namely *aparā* or lower *prakṛti* and *parā* or higher *prakṛti*. The former

## The Self in the Bhagavad-Gītā

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manifests itself as the five material elements, the mind, the intellect and the ego, while the latter reveals itself as the *jīvas* or living beings and governs the world<sup>3</sup>.

The *parā prakṛti* is identical with the *parā-śakti* or *cicchakti* (conscious power) of Pratyabhijñā and Śāktism. It bears some similarity also with the *taṭasthā-śakti* or perepheral power of Paramātmān of the philosophy of Śrī Caitanya, which is said to be revealing itself as the *jīvas* and to be the world-controlling power of Paramātmān.

Again, there are two *puruṣas*—*kṣara* and *akṣara*. The *kṣara puruṣa* means the *bhūtas* or effects which are subject to mutation, and the *akṣara puruṣa* means the *kūṭastha* or immutable reality<sup>4</sup>. Some hold that the '*kṣara puruṣa*' means the insentient or material elements, while some others take it in the sense of the bodies of the living beings. The *akṣara puruṣa* is explained by some as the *jīva* or self, and by some as Bhagavat or the Lord<sup>5</sup>. We are, however, inclined to take the '*kṣara puruṣa*' in the sense of the empirical or bound individual self identified with the mind-body, and the '*akṣara puruṣa*' in the sense of the real or transcendental Universal Self which manifests itself as the individual *jīvas* and is immanent in them. The *akṣara puruṣa* has two aspects—conditioned and unconditioned. In the conditioned aspect, the *akṣara puruṣa* is called *Kṣetrajña* which is to some extent similar to the Paramātmān in Śrī Caitanya's philosophy, while in the unconditioned aspect it is called Brahman.

### Nature of the Self

According to the *Gītā*, the self is completely different from the mind-body-complex, though it exists in the mind-body as the inner light and as the witness of all the events of life. It is *sanātana* or eternal, being devoid of origination and destruction and also of increase and decrease. It is free from



the cycle of birth and death and from the pains and sufferings accruing from it<sup>6</sup>. It is immutable and imperishable : weapons cannot cut it, fire cannot burn it ; water cannot make it wet ; and air cannot make it dry<sup>7</sup>. Through defferent births, the self remains the same, because it is the bodies that change—like wearing clothes—and not the self<sup>8</sup>. The self is *sarvagata* or all-pervasive : it pervades everything of the world. Being all pervasive, it is *sthānu* or stable and *acala* or without any movement<sup>9</sup>. It lies beyond the three *guṇas* of *prakṛti*, and is not influenced by the actions of the mind-body. The mind-body acts because of the *guṇas* of *prakṛti*, while the self, being free from the *guṇas*, remains completely action-less : it neither acts nor causes others to act<sup>10</sup>. Thus, the self is neither a *kartā* or doer of actions nor *bhoktā* or enjoyer of the fruits of its actions. It is immeasurable imperceptible and inexpressible<sup>11</sup>.

In the empirical state, however, the self does not realise its real nature, as it is then enveloped by *ajñāna* or ignorance. The empirical self is confined by the not-self—the mind, the senses and the body—and identifies itself with it. As a result, it is bound in the world and becomes a slave to nature. This empirical self undergoes birth and death and is subjected to the *guṇas* of *prakṛti* and also to the pains and sufferings accruing from these *guṇas*<sup>12</sup>. It is the *kartā* or doer of actions and *bhoktā* or the enjoyer of the fruits of its own actions.

When the self is freed from *ajñāna*, it realises its real nature as eternal, imperishable, changeless, birthless and deathless. The self of this state is unaffected by the *guṇas* of *prakṛti* and by the pains and sufferings connected with them<sup>13</sup>.

#### The Self and the Absolute

According to those who regard the *nirguṇa* or attributeless Brahman as the Absolute, the individual self is identical with

the attributeless Brahman, but to those who consider Puruṣottama as the Highest, the self is a real part or *aṁśa* of Puruṣottama.

Now, the *Gītā* describes the real self of the individual as non-different from Puruṣottama, and the *jīva* or the empirical self as a part or form of Puruṣottama and also of his *parā-prakṛti* or conscious power<sup>14</sup>. Again, it is said that a devotee attains similarity with Puruṣottama, while a *jñānin* attains *nirvāṇa* and merges into Brahman<sup>15</sup>. From these varied statements, it appears that the relation between the Absolute and the self is one of difference-cum-non-difference. The real position, however, seems to be this that the self is a form of Puruṣottama and shares both the aspects of the 'immutable essence' and the 'divine or conscious power' of Puruṣottama. And, just as Puruṣottama can exist as the actionless, qualityless and differenceless Brahman or can remain in divine sport through his divine power, so also the self can. The *Jñānins* or those who *purṣue* the path of knowledge and meditate upon the qualityless and actionless *akṣara* Brahman, merge in Brahman and become identical with it in liberation. A *bhakta* or devotee or Puruṣottama, on the other hand, shares his divine sport and remains with him through the relation of difference-cum-difference. Of course, a *Jñānin* is also said to attain Puruṣottama in the sense that the *akṣara*-Brahman attained by the *Jñānin* is but an aspect of Puruṣottama. Again, a *bhakta* of Puruṣottama is also said to be capable of merging into Brahman, because of the fact that Puruṣottama is the foundation of Brahman.

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1. brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhā ham—BG, 14.27.
2. See K. P. Sinha, *The Absolute in Indian Philosophy*, Ch. I.
3. prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām. Jīva-bhūtāṁ mahāvaho yayedam dhāryate jagat—BG, 7.5.

4. dvāy-imau puruṣau loke kṣaraś cākṣara eva ca. kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni kūṭastho' kṣara ucyate—*BG*, 15.16.
5. kūṭasthaḥ bhagavān...akṣara ucyate...kecit tu...kūṭastho 'kṣara ucyate' ity-arena jīvam āhuḥ—Madhusūdana's comt. on *ibid*.
6. sanātanah—*BG*, 2.24, ajo nityaḥ śāśvato'yaṁ purāṇo na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre—*ibid*, 2.20.
7. nainam chindanti śāstrani nainam dahati pāvakaḥ. na cainam kleda-yanty-ā o na śoṣayati mārutaḥ—*ibid*, 2.23.
8. *ibid*, 2, 13, 22.
9. yena sarvam-idaṁ tatam—*ibid*, 2.17 ; sthāṇur-acalo'yaṁ sanātanah—*ibid*, 2.24.
10. prakṛtyaiva ca karmāṇi kriyamāṇāni sarvaśaḥ. yaḥ paśyati tathātma-nam akartūraṁ saḥ paśyati—*ibid*, 13.29 ; naiva kurvan na kārayan—*ibid*, 5, 13 ; see also *ibid*, 3, 27.
11. anāśino' prameyasya—*ibid*, 2, 18 ; avyakto'yaṁ acintyo'yaṁ—*ibid*, 2.25.
12. ajñānenāvṛtaṁ jñānaṁ tena muhyanti jantavaḥ—*ibid*, 5, 15 ; cf. prakṛter guṇa-sammūḍhāḥ sajjante guṇa-karmasu—*ibid*, 3.29 and ahaṁ-kāra-vimūḍhātmā kartāham iti manyate—*ibid*, 3, 27.
13. jñānena tu tad-ajñānaṁ yeśāṁ nāśitam ātmanah—gacchanty-apunar-āvṛtīm jñāna-nirdhūta-kalmaṣāḥ—*ibid*, 5, 17.
14. kṣetrajñāṁ cāpi mān viddhi—*ibid*, 13.2 ; mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ—*ibid*, 15, 7 ; prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām. jīva bhūtām—*ibid*, 7.5.
15. idaṁ jñānam upāśritya mama sādharmyam āgatāḥ—*ibid*, 14, 2 ; see also *ibid*, 2.72, 8.24 and 13.34.

## CHAPTER

## 3

## THE SELF IN CĀRVĀKISM

## Introduction

The theory of reality propounded by the Cārvākas or Lokāyatikas follows from their theory of knowledge. According to their epistemology, perception is the only valid source of knowledge, while other sources of knowledge, like inference, verbal testimony etc. are not valid<sup>1</sup>. Accordingly, only those things can be considered as existing, which are attested by perception ; what is not perceived is not existent for the simple reason that it is not perceived.

The Cārvākas, therefore, do away with all beliefs in supernatural and transcendental realities which cannot be verified by perception. In their view, it is because of our wrong ways of thinking that we presume the existence of other worlds like heaven, hell etc<sup>2</sup>. and of supernatural beings or deities behind the natural phenomena. In reality, these are all non-existent, as they are not perceived by us.

## Nature of the Self

In consonance with their general outlook to reality, the Cārvākas do not accept a permanent self behind the physical organism. Of course, they accept the existence of consciousness, as it is directly experienced by all. But, in their view, this consciousness is not a quality of some unperceived non-material entity called *ātman* or self, but a by-product of matter.

It is said to be produced by the inter-action of the material elements of the body, just as the intoxicating power arises in molasses ( which is originally non-intoxicant ) when allowed to ferment<sup>3</sup>. Accordingly, the Cārvākas say that what we call the self is nothing but the mind-body-complex qualified by consciousness. They argue that this position is supported by such experiences, as 'I am stout', 'I am young', 'I am old', 'I am happy' etc., which directly refer to the mind-body<sup>4</sup>. Thus, in the view of the Cārvākas, there is no spiritual eternal substance called the self. What is generally known as the self, they say, is not an eternal entity but an effect of matter, which ceases to be as soon as the causes—the material elements are disintegrated or are incapable of manifesting the power of consciousness. The life of an individual continues to exist so long as the mind-body-complex exists, and comes to an end with the destruction of it. There is, therefore, no rebirth ; nor is there anything like liberation or eternal life of the self<sup>5</sup>.

The above position is said to be held by the Cārvākas in general. There are also references to other classes of the Cārvākas who differ in their views regarding the nature of the self. Some of them identify the self with the *indriyas* or the sense organs ; some, with the *prāṇas* or vital airs ; some others, with the *manas* or mind<sup>6</sup>. The Cārvākas say that since there is no permanent self beyond this mind-body-complex, morality or religious discipline for the attainment of happiness or some higher plane of existence after this life is without any meaning. In their view, the attainment of happiness in this world should be the aim of life<sup>7</sup>.

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2. na svargo nāpavargo vā naivātmā pāralaukikāḥ—*SDS*, Ch. I ; nāsti paralokaḥ—*Vārhaspatya sūtra*, 29.

3. prthivyādīni catvāri bhūtāni. tebhya eva dehākāra-pariṇatebhyāḥ kiṇvādibhyo madaśaktivat caitanyam upajāyate—*SDS*, Ch. I ; madaśaktiḥ suraṅgebhyo yadvat—*Śat-darśanasamuccaya*.
4. caitanya-viśiṣṭa-deha eva ātmā—*SDS*, Ch. I ; sthūlo 'ham kṛṣo' ham, ityādyanubhavāc ca sthūla-śarīram ātmā iti Vadati—*Vedānta-sāra*, 98 ; cainatya-viśiṣṭaḥ kāyaḥ puruṣaḥ—*BSS*, 3.3.53.
5. dehocchedo mokṣaḥ—*SDS*, Ch. I ; dehasya nāso muktiḥ—*ibid* ; etāvāneva loko 'yam—*Śat-darśana-samuccaya* ; maraṇam eva apavargaḥ—*Advaita-brahma-siddhi*.
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7. yāvaj-jīvaṁ sukhaṁ jīvet—*SDS*, Ch. I ; dharmādharmau na vidyete na phalaṁ puṇya-pāpayoḥ—*Śat-darśana-samuccaya* ; kāma evaikaḥ puruṣārthaḥ—*Advaita-Brahma-siddhi*.



## CHAPTER

### 4

## THE SELF IN JAINISM

### Introduction

The Jainas do not accept the existence of *Īśvara* or the Absolute forming the foundation of the selves and the world or creating and guiding them in their progress. The selves and the material world are regarded by the Jainas as self-existent, independent and distinct realities not depending upon any other higher principle for their existence. In their progress also, they are not at all dependent on the mercy of some world-governor—*Īśvara* or Brahman. The selves are guided by their own actions, while the material world is guided by the inter-action of the natural laws and the collective effects of the acts of the selves.

### Nature of the Self

The Jainas regard the self as essentially conscious. If it were non-conscious, as is held by the Naiyāyikas, knowledge could not arise in it, just as it cannot arise in the non-conscious *ākāśa*. The Jainas further argue that every individual feels that he is conscious. No one perceives thus: 'I am non-conscious and become conscious when consciousness is attached to me'. This shows without any doubt that *caitanya* or consciousness is an essential attribute of the self<sup>1</sup>. Consciousness of the self has two manifestations, namely *darśana* or intuition (indeterminate knowledge or knowledge of the constituents of knowledge) and *jñāna* or knowledge (determinate knowledge)<sup>2</sup>.

The self is the active agent and enjoyer of the fruits its own actions. It is subjected to the Law of Karman and undergoes the cycle of birth and death in accordance with its own actions. Like the Naiyāyikas, the Jainas repudiate the theory of the absolute indifference of the self as held by the Sāṃkhyaists.

According to the Jainas, the self is subject to change or modification. Unlike the Naiyāyikas and others, the Jainas regard the self as mutable. They argue that if the self were immutable, cognitions could not arise in it. For before the acquisition of knowledge, the self is devoid of knowledge, while after the rise of knowledge, it becomes the knower i. e. endowed with knowledge. These two states could not be explained if the self were immutable or self-identical and not subject to any change. Thus, different states of the self clearly shows that it is changeable<sup>3</sup>. In the view of the Jainas, the self is of *madhyama-parimāṇa* or limited magnitude and is a bit smaller than the body in which it resides. It is not all-pervasive, as the Naiyāyikas and others hold. The Jainas argue that if the self were all-pervasive, it would come in contact simultaneously with all the bodies, senses and minds, and, as a result, could know and act through all bodies, senses and minds. In that case, differences of knowledge, action, birth, death etc. found in different individuals could not be explained. In other words, the difference in the experiences of the selves is a fact which cannot be adjusted to the all-pervasiveness of the self<sup>4</sup>.

Like the empirical selves or selves under bondage, the liberated selves are also described by the Jainas as intermediary in magnitude. It is generally held that the liberated self is slightly smaller in magnitude than the body of its last birth. Brahmadeva, however, says that such a self (*siddha*) is, actually, *atīndriya* or super-sensuous, *akāya* or bodyless—and *amūrta* or not-gross and *nirākāra* or formless<sup>5</sup>. The *Ācāraṅga-sūtra* also says that the liberated self is not long, not short, not round, not atomic, not extended, and so on<sup>6</sup>. These descriptions indicate that the liberated self in its real nature is of unlimited

magnitude. Nemicaṇḍra clearly states that from the transcendental point of view, the self is without any form or limitation.

According to the Jainas, the self is not one, but many, as it is different in different individuals. It is, however, worthy of notice that according to the Tridaṇḍins, 'liberation means the absorption of the *jīva* or empirical self into Paramātman'<sup>7</sup>. This seems to indicate that in the final state of disembodied liberation, the selves lose their mutual differences and merge into one Supreme Self.

The Jainas hold that the self in its real nature is pure, free, perfect and divine, and is endowed with *ananta-catuṣṭaya* i. e. four infinite qualities : infinite knowledge, infinite intuition, infinite bliss and infinite power. But during the empirical state, its real nature is obscured and enveloped by some atomic particles called *karma-parāmanus* or karmic atoms. These atomic particles are quite foreign to the nature of the self ; they are attracted from outside by the self through its own *karmans* and are absorbed into its body. As a result of this absorption of the karmic atoms, the self becomes impure and imperfect, and its four infinite attributes become finitised<sup>8</sup>. During this state, therefore, the self is endowed with limited knowledge, limited intuition, limited bliss and limited power. This is the state of bondage and ignorance. Again, when the self, through proper spiritual practices, stops the entrance of fresh *karma*-atoms, and washes out the *karma*-particles already absorbed into its body, it regains its natural qualities i. e. the *ananta-catuṣṭaya*. This is the state of liberation<sup>9</sup>.

#### Acquisition of Omniscience in Liberation

The Jainas hold that the liberated self acquires pure, perfect and infinite knowledge revealing everything of the world. This knowledge is called *kevala-jñāna* which is nothing but omniscience. This omniscience is generally attained by the selves

in their disembodied state. But those who can fully develop their intrinsic nature during worldly life through rigorous practices, can attain it even in their embodied state. And persons who can thus acquire omniscience during their embodied state are called arhats or *īrthañkaras*.

A question may here be raised whether the liberated and self can really attain omniscience or not. In a number of philosophical systems of India, omniscience has been denied of the self. The *Mīmāṃsakas*, in particular, are seriously against the concept of the omniscience of the self. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas accept the omniscience of *Īśvara*, but not of the self. The Jainas, on the other hand, strongly assert that the enlightened self can attain omniscience. In support of this contention, they put forward the following syllogism : Some self knows everything ; because the self is of the nature of knowing everything and is free from all the obstacles standing in the way of knowing everything ; that which is of the nature of knowing something and is free from the obstacles standing in the way of knowing that thing knows that thing e. g. the eye which is of the nature of seeing colour and which, when freed from envelopments like darkness and others, sees colour<sup>10</sup>.

It is asked : what is the ground for the contention that the self is of the nature of knowing everything ? In reply, the Jainas argue thus : The *Āgamas* having relation to everything are infallible, and, by pursuing these *Āgamas*, one can acquire the knowledge of everything. The *Āgamas* being thus infallible and capable of revealing everything, the person or persons who spoke out these *Āgamas* must be regarded as knowing everything. The Jainas further argue that, since the *Vedas* are regarded by the *Mīmāṃsakas* as giving valid information about all things or events—past, present and future, far and near, direct and indirect, subtle and gross—the speakers of the *Vedas* should be regarded as knowing everything<sup>11</sup>.

It is again asked : what is the ground for the contention that the self can remove all the obstacles standing in the way

of knowing everything? To this, the Jainas reply that, as there are degrees of knowledge in men, we must accept degrees of envelopment of knowledge and also degrees of the removal of the envelopment of knowledge. And if the degrees of the removal of envelopment of knowledge is thus possible, they continue, it can be held that a stage will come when all the envelopments of knowledge will be removed. The syllogism put forward by the Jainas is this: The envelopment of ignorance pertaining to some person is capable of being destroyed totally, because it is the object of the degrees of destruction brought about by the degrees of the causes, just as the sediments pertaining to pure gold are destroyed by degrees in consonance with the degree of roasting, and are fully destroyed at the end<sup>12</sup>.

With this and other arguments, the Jainas try to establish that the enlightened self can acquire omniscience or knowledge of everything.

### The Self as Independent and Self-Guided

For the explanation of the life and progress of the Jivas or individual selves, the Jainas do not feel the necessity of postulating any God. The beings live and make progress by themselves, and in this journey of their life, the guiding principle is the Law of Karman. From beginningless time, the living beings are passing through series of births and rebirths in according with their own *Karmans* or actions. A being attains a particular way of life as a result of the actions of his past lives and the actions of his present life, on their part, determine the course of his future life<sup>13</sup>. The Law of Karman states that one is sure to reap the results, good or bad, of one's own actions; no person can avoid the fruits of the acts performed by him. In the Jaina philosophy, as in the other schools of Indian philosophy, this Law of Karman occupies a very prominent place. Amitagati says that a person enjoys the good or

bad effects of actions performed by him formerly, and that if a person is to experience the fruits of actions done by another, his own actions will become fruitless<sup>14</sup>.

According to Indian Philosophy, this Law of Karman plays the supreme role in the life of a being. Even the God of the theists is said to be guiding the lives of beings in accordance with the Law of Karman; His acts do not transgress the limits of *Karman* but are in harmony with them. The Jainas also hold that it is this Law of Karman that accounts for the course of the life of a being. But, unlike the theists, the Jainas hold that this law works by itself directly and mechanically, without the guidance of any conscious principle<sup>15</sup>. In other words, the selves are guided by the acts of their own; they are the makers of their own lives.

The Jainas assert that the self is by nature pure and is capable of knowing everything. In its empirical life, however, this nature of the self is not revealed, because during this stage it is influenced or modified by the four *bhāva-pratyayas* or emotional dispositions, namely, *rati* or lust, *rāga* or attachment, *dveṣa* or aversion and *moha* or enchantment. These emotional dispositions are, on their part, caused by five *bhāva-karmans*, such as, *mithyā-darśana* or wrong belief, *avirati* or unrestraint, *pramāda* or recklessness, *Kaṣāya* or improper feeling and *yoga* or psychical torpor<sup>16</sup>.

As a result of the modification of the self, some peculiar material particles called *Karma-paramāṇus* which are quite foreign to the nature of the self, flow into its being and corrupt its nature. This inflow of *Karma-paramāṇus* into the self is called *āsrava*. It is this *āsrava* that brings the self under bondage, as a result of which the self is endowed with a material body and is subjected to various limitations<sup>17</sup>.

The Naiyāyikas hold that it is the all-knowing and all powerful God who associates the selves with proper material bodies and limits their natural capabilities, in accordance with their *adṛṣṭas* i. e. the merits and demerits arising from their own

good and bad actions. For the Jainas, however, the encasement of the self in the material body and the limitations of its nature are caused not by God but by the Law of Karman. It is because of the *Karmans* of the self that the *Karma*-particles flow into its being and limit its nature<sup>18</sup>. The worldly selves are said to be related to the *Karma*-particles in such a way that the modification in the former mechanically entails modification in the latter. Thus, the working of the self and the *Karma*-particles are to be found in the very natures of the self and the *Karma*-particles; for the explanation of their workings and mutual relations, we are not required to accept some intelligent principle like God.

The attainment of liberation is also due to the *Karmans* of the self. As it is the *āsrava* or inflow of *Karma*-particles into the self that brings the self under bondage, the first duty of one hankering after liberation is to stop this inflow of *Karma*-particles. The Jainas hold that one can stop the inflow of *Karma*-matter by the pursuance of *guṇti* or restraint of all the activities of the self, *saṃti* or careful attitude, *dharma* or observance, *anuprekṣā* or contemplation on the unsatisfactory nature of the world, *pariśaha-jaya* or conquest of troubles, and *cāritra* or good conduct. This stoppage of the inflow of *Karma*-matter is called *saṃvara*<sup>19</sup>. Further, the *Karma*-particles which have already entered into the self require to be washed out or destroyed for the attainment of liberation. Some of these *Karma*-particles are to be destroyed by experiencing the fruits accruing from them, while others are to be destroyed by *tapah* or penance etc. This act of clearing the self of *Karma*-particles already entered into the body of the self is called *nirjarā*<sup>20</sup>. In this whole process leading to *mokṣa*, three things are essential: *samyak-darśana* or right faith, *samyak-jñāna* or right knowledge and *samyak-cāritra* or right conduct, which are together called *ratna-traya* or three jewels of Jainism. It is by the persuance of these three jewels that the self attains liberation<sup>21</sup>.

Thus, in the whole life-history of the self, it is *Karman* that rules supreme. It is the self's own *Karman* that determines its course of life mechanically and leads it to bondage or liberation. The performance of *Karman*, the relation between the self and the fruits of *Karman*, liberation from the effects of *Karman*—all these are to be explained only with reference to the nature and activity of the self. Here, there is no need of postulating any foreign administrator like God.

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13. janmāntarārjita-śubhāśubhakṣṇ-narāṇām, chāyeva na tyajati kārya-phalānubandham—*Śānti-śataka*.
14. svayaṃ kṛtāṃ karma yadātmanā purā phalaṃ tadīyaṃ labhate śubhāśubham. pareṇa dattaṃ yadi labhyate sphuṭaṃ svayaṃ kṛtāṃ karma nirarthakaṃ tadā—*Bhāvanā-dvātrimśat*.



15. *Viśva-tattva-prakāśa*, p. 56 ; Bhattacharya, *op cit.* p. 178.
16. *mithyādarśanāvirati-pramāda-kaṣāya-yogaḥ bandhahetavaḥ—Tattvārtha-sūtra*, 8.1.
17. *yoga-praṇālikayā karma āsravatīti sa yogaḥ āsravaḥ—SDS*, Ch. 3.
18. *SDS*, Ch. 31 ; Bhattacharya, *op cit.* p. 197.
19. *Lad, op cit.* pp. 39-40 ; *āsrava-nirodhaḥ samvaraḥ.....gupti-samity-ādayaḥ samvaraḥ—SDS*, Ch. 3.
20. *arjitasya karmaṇaḥ tapaḥ-prabhṛtibhiḥ nirjaraṇaṁ nirjarākhyam tattvam—SDS*, Ch. 3.
21. *samyag-darśana-iñāna-cāritrāṇi mokṣa-mārgaḥ—Tattvārthasūtra*, i. 1 ; *ratna-traya-pada-vedanīyaṁ samyag-darśanādi-tritayam—SDS*, Ch. 3 .

## CHAPTER

## 5

## THE SELF IN BUDDHISM

## Introduction

To the six well-known schools of Indian philosophy called the *āstika*-schools, the Buddha is known as a nihilist denying any permanent self behind the individual of the mind-body-complex. Among modern thinkers also, there are many who are of the opinion that Buddha does not accept any self. Let us, here make an endeavour to ascertain what Buddha and his followers say on this point.

In the view of the Buddhists, all the elements of the world are impermanent or momentary<sup>1</sup> and are guided by the Law of Causation. Accordingly, the elements of an individual are also momentary and are guided by the law of Causation. The chain of causation in the life-process of an individual consists of twelve links or *dvādaśa nidānas* of which each preceding link determines the succeeding one. These twelve links are : (1) *avidyā* or ignorance, (2) *saṃskāra* or the aggregate of the dispositions of the earlier life, (3) *viññāna* or consciousness, (4) *nāma-rūpa* or mental (*nāma*) are physical (*rūpa*) conditions, (5) *ṣaḍ-āyatana* or six sense-organs, (6) *sparsa* or contact between the senses and the objects, (7) *vedanā* or sensation, (8) *tiṣṇā* or desire, (9) *upādāna* or attachment, (10) *bhāva* or existence or becoming, (11) *Jāti* or birth and (12) *jarā-maraṇa* or old-age and death<sup>2</sup>.

This chain of causation in the life of an individual is guided by the Law of Karman which, on its part, is a manifestation of the cosmic principle *dharma*. The Law of Karman states that

15. *Viśva-tattva-prakāśa*, p. 56 ; Bhattacharya, *op cit.* p. 178.
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every act of a conscious being is sure to bring forth its requisite effect on the doer in due course of time, and that no person can escape the fruits of his own actions. Thus, according to this law, our life is created by us; there is no divine hand or some other outer agency to guide or act upon us. What is allotted to us at the present is the result of our previous *karmans* or actions, and actions done at present will make the future of our life<sup>3</sup>. This law thus declares that man is the architect of his own life; it is man himself who can form or remake his future by his own endeavour.

### Denial of the Existence of a Permanent Individual Self

Quite in harmony with the Law of Impermanence or Momentariness, the Buddhists hold that there is nothing in the individual which can be regarded as immortal and eternal, as distinct from the elements of individuality which are subject to incessant change. In other words, according to the Buddhists, there is no permanent self in the individual; what we call the individual is nothing but a *saṃghāta* or aggregate of different elements.

The elements constituting an individual are called *skandhas* or groups. These elements are five in number, namely, *rūpa* or the physical body, *vedanā* or feeling, *saṃjñā* or perception, *saṃskāra* or mental disposition, and *viññāna* or consciousness or intellect. Of these elements, the first denotes the material body, while the rest four elements are psychical in nature. An individual is, therefore, a complex of mind and body. And as all these elements and their mutual relations are always in a process of change, an individual is to be regarded as ever-changing and ever-becoming, without a being. It is fruitless, the Buddhist say, to search for a permanent self in the elements of an individual<sup>4</sup>. In the *Saṃyukta-Nikāya*, it has been said that what appears as the self is only a bundle or combination

of ideas, emotions and active tendencies. These elements of an individual exist by themselves; there is no substratum for them<sup>5</sup>. Nun Vajirā says that there is no such thing as person; what we call a person is merely a collocation of changing aggregates, just as a chariot means a collocation of its materials<sup>6</sup>. In *Milinda Pañha*, it has been shown that the name Nāgasena does not denote any self; it is merely an appellation given to the five aggregates constituting the psycho-physical organism<sup>7</sup>. And as these elements undergo changes every moment, the individual must be regarded as an ever-changing entity. An analysis of the elements of individuality does not point to any permanent self running in and through these elements. The Buddha has again and again said that neither any of these elements nor a collection of all of them can be regarded as the self, because these are all perishable. He thus says, "But that which is transient, painful, subject to all vicissitude, is it possible to regard it? 'This is mine, this am I, this is my self'?"<sup>8</sup> Thus, according to Buddha, there is no permanent self in an individual. A self or an eternal individual spirit believed to be persisting in and through the changes of the elements of an individual and to be migrating from one birth to another is a fiction, for Buddha.

### Acceptance of an Impermanent Empirical or Provisional Self

Now, the question is: If there is no self, what does the term 'I' mean? The reply is this that, though the Buddha does not accept a permanent or unchanging self behind the psycho-physical organism, he accepts a provisional or empirical self. This empirical self is not a permanent reality, but a *santāna* or chain or ever-changing elements. It is this provisional self that is denoted by the term 'I'. What the Buddha means to

say is this : Whenever an individual uses the term 'I' or 'self', he denotes by it some or all of the elements of the psycho-physical set. It is these psycho-physical elements, taken jointly or individually, that are called the empirical or provisional self<sup>9</sup>. And the psycho-physical elements being ever in a process of change, the empirical self constituted of them is also an ever-changing entity. What we call the 'self' is, therefore, not permanent but momentary. Further, it is to be accepted that this mind-body-complex is the root-cause of selfishness, hatred etc. and, hence, of all evils, pains and sufferings<sup>10</sup>. Buddha, therefore, tells us to destroy this self which is nothing but the mind-body or, strictly speaking, which is not the self or 'eternal individual spirit'. Thus, Buddha accepts a provisional self which is a *santāna* or continuum i. e. an ever-changing entity, and not an eternal individual spirit.

#### Mid-way Course between Eternalism and Nihilism

It is said that the Buddha regards the self sometimes as existent and sometimes as non-existent. As an empirical and ever-changing entity or *santāna*, the self is said to be existent, while as an eternal individual spirit, it is said to be non-existent. The Buddha is said to hold these two contradictory views i. e. the existence and non-existence of the self to show a mid-way course between Eternalism and Nihilism. Thus, Nagārjuna in his commentary on the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* says : "The Tathāgata sometimes taught that the *ātman* exists and at other times he taught that the *ātman* does not exist. When he preached that the *ātman* exists and is to be the receiver of misery or happiness in the successive life as the reward of its own *Karma*, his object was to save men from falling into the heresy of Nihilism ( *Ucchedavāda* ). When he taught that there is no *ātman* in the sense of a creator or perceiver or an absolutely free agent, apart from

the conventional came given to the aggregate of the five *skandhas*, his object was to save men from falling into the opposite heresy of Eternalism ( *Śāśvatavāda* ). Now which of these two views represents the truth ? It is doubtless the doctrine of the denial of *ātman*... He taught the existence of *ātman* when he wanted to impart to his hearers the conventional doctrine : he taught the doctrine of *anātman* when he wanted to impart to them the transcendental doctrine"<sup>11</sup>. In other words, if 'self' means the ever-changing or impermanent empirical self, then 'it is' ; but if the 'self' means a permanent and immutable individual spirit, then 'it is not'.

Similarly Dharmapālācārya in his commentary on the *Vijñāna-mātra-śāstra* says : "The existence of the *ātman* and of the *dharma*s ( i. e., of the Ego and of the phenomenal world ) is affirmed in the Sacred Canon only provisionally and hypothetically and never in the sense of their possessing a real and permanent nature"<sup>12</sup>.

Vasubandhu also says, "Buddha's preaching of the Good Law resembles a tigress's bringing up of her cub. Buddha observes how some of his fellow-creatures receive hurt from the heresy of Eternalism, while others allow their good *Karma* to be eaten up by the heresy of Nihilism. Thus, whoever believes in the existence of *ātman* in its transcendental sense, exposes himself to the tiger's tooth of the heresy of Eternalism, and whoever does not believe in the existence of *ātman* in its conventional sense, runs the risk of destroying the seeds of his own good *Karma*"<sup>13</sup>.

The real position, therefore, is this that though the Buddha and his followers accept the provisional or empirical self, they emphatically deny the existence of a permanent individual spirit imagined to be a concrete agent—thinker, doer and experiencer—and to be different from the psycho-physical organism, though enshrined in it. Such a permanent self being logically untenable is called *hīnātman* or lower self by the later Buddhists.

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3. vaiśvarūpyam hi karmajam—*Tattva-saṃgraha*, Īśvara-parikṣā, 80; Theo Stcherbatsky, *Central Conception of Buddhism*, pp. 31-2.
4. upādānam te pañcupādāna-kkhandhā—*MN*, 44-1; *SN*, 22. 12. 22.
5. rūpam aniccaṃ, vedanā—saññā, saṃkhārā—viññānam aniccaṃ; rūpam anattā, vedanā—saññā—saṃkhārā viññānam a rattā; sabbe saṃkhārā anicci, sabbe dhammā anattā—*SN*, 22.90.
6. yathā hi aṅga-sambhārā hoti saddo ratho iti. evaṃ khandhesu santeṣu hoti satto ti sammuti—*ibid*, 5.10.10.
7. nā asena iti saṃjñā samajñā prajñaptir vyavahāro nāma—mātram pravartate. paramārthataḥ punar atra pudgalo nopalabhyate ( sanskrit version )—*Milinda-pañha*, 2.1.2.
8. yaṃ pañāniccam dukkhaṃ vipariṇāma-dhammaṃ kallaṃ na taṃ samanupassitum 'etaṃ mama, esoham-asmi, eso me attā' ti—*SN*, 22.86 and *MN*, 35.3.
9. See 6 above.
10. puthujjano—rūpam attato samanupassati—baddho jīyati baddho mīyati baddho asmā lokā param lokāṃ gacchati—*SN*, 22.117.
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13. Nanjio's Cat No. 1267 'fasciculi XXX', quoted by Sagen *ibid*.
14. A. B. Keith, *Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 61.
15. *Digha Nikāya*, 1. 1; George Grimm, *The Doctrine of the Buddha*, pp. 125, 139, 369.
16. See 8 above.
17. Kumārā, Katamaṃ nu kho tumhākaṃ varam—yaṃ vā tumhe itthiṃ gaveseyyāthā, yaṃ vā attānaṃ gaveseyyāthā ti? —*Mahāvagga*, 1. 13.
18. 'atthattā'ti byākareyyam, ye te, ānanda, samaṇa-brāhmaṇā sassata-vādā te-sametam saddhīm abhaviṣṣa—'natthattā'ti byākareyyam, ye te, ānanda, samana-brāhmaṇā uccheda-vādā te-sametam saddhīm abhaviṣṣa—*SN*, 44.10.

## CHAPTER

## 6

## THE SELF IN MĪMĀṆSA

## Introduction

According to the general interpretation, the Mīmāṃsakas do not accept the existence of God or the Absolute said to be lying beyond the selves and the world and synthesising or governing them. The selves and matter are said to be self-existent and self-guided. They do not depend upon any other reality for their existence, nor are they governed by some higher principle. The selves are guided by the *adṛṣṭas* or effects of their own *karmans*, while the material world is governed by the inter-action of the physical laws and the *adṛṣṭas* of the selves.

However, on the strength of some *sūtras* found in the *Brahmasūtra* of Bādarāyaṇa<sup>1</sup>, we are of the view that Jaimini, the propounder of this system, accepts the existence of Brahman, the Absolute. The relation between Brahman and the self is, however, not clear, though from the above mentioned *sūtras* of Bādarāyaṇa, we may imagine that Jaimini's view regarding the relation between Brahman and the self is similar to that of Bādarāyaṇa i. e. Brahman and the self are in a relation of identity.

The later Mīmāṃsakas prescribe in clear terms the worship of Īśvara or the World-Governor, but their idea of the relation between Īśvara and the self is not clear.

## Nature of the Self

According to the Mīmāṃsakas, the self is a real substance endowed with the attributes of knowledge, action and



feeling. The self performs actions and experiences their results either in this world or in the other world. It moves to different worlds in accordance with the results of its actions. Again, the self knows objects through consciousness and experiences pleasures and pains. The Mīmāṃsakas argue that if there were no self, the *Vedas* ordaining performance of actions for the attainment of heaven and liberation will be meaningless. The self is thus a knower or *jñātā*, doer or *kartā* and enjoyer or *bhoktā*<sup>2</sup>.

The self is *nitya* or eternal ; it is devoid of origination and destruction. The self is *vibhu* or all-pervading ; it is not limited by time or space. It is neither atomic nor intermediary in magnitude. It cannot be atomic, because if it were so, it could not experience the changes or sensations occurring all over the body at one and the same time. Neither can it be of intermediary size, since if it were so, it would be endowed with parts, and if it were endowed with parts, it would be subject to origination and destruction. The self is, therefore, all-pervading<sup>3</sup>. But though the self is omnipresent, its qualities like pleasure, pain, knowledge etc. are manifested only in a particular body and are experienced by the particular individual concerned. The events occurring in the body of an individual cannot be experienced by another, since the experience of an individual depends upon the *Karmans* or actions connected with the body of that individual<sup>4</sup>. It is objected that the self, being omnipresent, cannot be an agent, since agency implies movement or action which is not possible for an all-pervading entity. The Mīmāṃsakas reply that here movement does not mean movement from one place to another like that of atoms ; it means action of energy or *śakti*—a separate category accepted in Mīmāṃsā—which itself being unmoved causes the atoms to move. The all-pervading self is endowed with this energy which it imparts to the body and causes it to move<sup>5</sup>. The self is, thus an agent not because it moves but because it causes the body to move.

The self is distinct from the body, the *indriyas* or senses, and *buddhi* or intellect. The self is distinct from the body, because the self is endowed with the qualities of knowledge, feeling etc., but the body is devoid of them. Again, these attributes of knowledge, feeling etc. are not perceived by others, while the qualities of the body are, Kamārila, therefore, says that the qualities like action, will, knowledge, pleasure, pain, etc., do not belong to the body, because they are not found in a dead body. These attributes, therefore, must belong to some entity different from the body. That entity is the self. The self is distinct from the senses also, since the self persists even when the senses are injured or destroyed. Moreover, the data supplied by different senses cannot be synthesised by the senses themselves. For the synthesis of these data, some other principle is required, which is the self.

Again, the fact that we can perceive a single object by more than one sense-organs indicates that the perceiver is different from the senses. The self is different from *buddhi* or intellect also, because during sleep *buddhi* is absent, but the self persists, as is clear from recollections like 'I slept happily'<sup>6</sup>. Thus, the self is the principle which endures through all the changes of the body, the senses and the intellect.

In its real nature, the self is devoid of knowledge, action and bliss. That is why in deep sleep the self does not know anything, nor does it act nor feel any pleasure or pain. Expressions like 'I slept in bliss' indicate simply the absence of pains, and not the presence of positive bliss. In liberation, when the self realises its own nature, it exists merely as *sat* or pure existence. Of course, in this state also, the self has the potency of knowledge and feeling, but as it is then divested of the body, the senses etc., it cannot know or feel anything. The self in its real nature is thus devoid of knowledge, action, pleasure, pain etc. Knowledge and bliss do not constitute the essence of the self ; they are qualities generated in it by its energy and also by the operation of the body and the senses. That means,

the self becomes the substratum of qualities like knowledge activity, pleasure, pain etc., when it is endowed with the body and the senses in its empirical state. In the case of ordinary acts, the self becomes the doer and agent only indirectly, while in the case of acts like being, existing, knowing and the like, it is the agent and doer directly<sup>7</sup>.

Both Prabhākara and Kumārila hold that the real self or the self in liberation is devoid of cognition. But there are controversy among interpreters whether according to them the self is of the nature of *samvit* i. e. consciousness or not\*. If the Mīmāṃsakas consider the self as of the nature of *samvit*, this nature must be regarded as persisting in liberation. If they do not regard *samvit* as the essence of the self, then the self must be regarded as inert. In that case, the Mīmāṃsaka conception of liberation will be identical with that of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas<sup>8</sup>. Prabhākara and Pārthasārathi hold that the self in liberation is devoid of bliss. Kumārila also seems to hold the same view. The author of *Mānameyodaya* however, says that according to Kumārila, liberation is a state of bliss. *Śāstra-dīpikā* also refers to this view<sup>9</sup>.

### The Self as the Object of Knowledge

According to Prabhākara, the existence of a permanent self cannot be known directly ; it is known indirectly from the fact of recognition. The act of recognition involves two factors, namely *smṛti* or recollection and *pūrvānubhava* or previous perception of objects. The fact that we can remember a past cognition points to the existence of a permanent self as the *āśraya* or substrate of earlier perception and present recollection. Thus, Prabhākara holds that the permanent self is not the object of recognition, but the substrate thereof<sup>10</sup>. In his

\* For details, see *Reflexions on Indian Philosophy*, pp. 184-5.

view, the self cannot be an object of perception, internal or external ; it is revealed in every act of cognition as the *Kartā* or agent of cognition, and not as the *Karma* or object. He argues that the same entity, i.e., the self cannot be both the subject and the object of knowledge. In other words, the self, being revealed only as the agent, as distinct from knowledge and object of knowledge, there is nothing like self-consciousness, as distinct from object-consciousness<sup>11</sup>.

Kumārila and Pārthasārathi, however, hold that the self is an object of consciousness, since there is no contradiction in accepting the self as both the subject and the object of cognition. In Pārthasārathi's view, the very assertion of Prabhākara that the self is manifested in cognition means that the self is an object of consciousness<sup>12</sup>. Kumārila and Pārthasārathi say that in an act of cognition, the self is involved, it is true, but it is not manifested in the apprehension of the object. It is manifested as an object of a separate mental perception or *mānasapratyakṣa*, which is distinct from the knowledge of objects and is represented by the 'I'-consciousness<sup>13</sup>. It is argued that if the self were not an object of knowledge, the *Upaniṣadic* injunction 'know the self' would be meaningless. Moreover, unless the self were an object of knowledge, it would not be possible to remember the existence of the self in the past. The fact that we can remember the existence of the self in the past indicates that the self becomes the object of cognition. Pārthasārathi also holds that it is the self apprehended as the object of an earlier perception that becomes the object of the present recollection or recognition. The idea is this that an object which is never perceived cannot be the object of recollection or recognition. Hence, the recollection of the self shows without any doubt that the self can become an object of perception. In the view of Kumārila, the self is both consciousness and the substrate of cognition : the self as the *dravya* or the substantial element is the object of knowledge,

while the self as the elements of *bodha* or consciousness is the subject thereof<sup>14</sup>.

Śabara, while propounding the theory of the self as a permanent cogniser, holds that it is 'known by itself and is incapable of being seen or shown by others'. This implies that the self, according to him, is one with consciousness and is both the agent of cognition and the object of it<sup>15</sup>.

### Self-luminosity of the Self

According to Prabhākara, the self, being the substratum of consciousness or *samvit* and not consciousness itself, is not self-luminous. He holds that it is knowledge, the attribute of the self, that is self-luminous and not the self as such. At the time of its rise, knowledge illumines, along with itself, both the self and the object. This illumination of the self or knower, the object or known, and knowledge in the same act of knowledge is called *tripuṭi-pratyakṣa* or three-fold perception. In it, the self is revealed as 'I' or the agent, as distinct from knowledge and the object of knowledge. It is held that the self is cognised as the agent only when knowledge arises. In deep sleep, there being no knowledge of any object, the self is not cognised. The self is thus, not self-revealed; it is revealed by knowledge<sup>16</sup>. To quote Dr. S. N. Dasgupta, "It is not the soul which is self-illuminated but knowledge; so it is knowledge which illumines both the self and the object in one operation"<sup>17</sup>. This position of the Prabhākaras 'neither accepts the realist view that the self is known as an object, nor the Advaita view that it is self-revealed'. Of course, the self for the Prabhākaras is self-luminous in the sense that it is cognisable by every person for himself. Prabhākara says that the self is proved by the universally admitted and undeniable notion of 'I', which is self-luminous. To quote MM. G. N. Jha, "...like cognition, the Soul also is self-luminous. Each man cognises his own soul for himself"<sup>18</sup>.

Further, Prabhākara sometimes declares the self as *samvit*. And *samvit* being self-luminous, the self also should be regarded as self-luminous. Śālikanātha, too, while refuting the view of Kumārila that the self is an object of mental perception, holds that the self is self-luminous and is manifested in the cognition of external objects<sup>19</sup>.

As regards the view of Kumārila regarding the self-luminosity of the self, scholars differ in their opinions. Dr. S. N. Dasgupta is of the view that Kumārila, like Prabhākara, denies the self-luminosity of the self on the ground that in deep sleep the self does not manifest itself. MM. G. N. Jha, on the other hand, holds that, according to Kumārila, the self is self-luminous<sup>20</sup>. But the point is that, according to Kumārila, the self is not merely the substratum of consciousness, it is of the nature of consciousness as well. And, consciousness being self-luminous, the self should be regarded as self-luminous. Kumārila himself says that the self is revealed by itself to itself<sup>21</sup>. Of course, the self is self-luminous not in the sense of the Advaitins, since Kumārila divides the self, as it were, into two, namely the aspect of *dravya* and the aspect of *bodha*. Pārthasārathi, however, holds that the self is not self-luminous.

### Multiplicity of the Self

According to the Mīmāṃsakas, the self is not one but many; it is different in every individual. As one's body can perform actions because of the presence of the self, it is assumed that the actions in others' bodies are also caused by the presence of the corresponding selves in those bodies. If there were no different selves, there would not be differences in experiences of pleasures, pains, etc. in different individuals. The differences of *dharma*s, *adharma*s, births, deaths etc. of different individuals also could not be explained without presuming the plurality of the selves<sup>22</sup>. If there were only one self in all persons, then all of them would be endowed with the same attributes. Some Advaitins say that,

just as one sun reflected in different loci seems to be many, so one self reflected in many individual *avidyās* seems to be many. The Mīmāṃsakas counter that, as in this case the difference of qualities is due to the reflecting media, and not to the sun, this analogy will imply that the qualities said to be residing in the self belong actually to the body, and not to the self<sup>23</sup>. As regards the *Upaniṣadic* statement that the self is 'one', Kumārila holds that the implication of this statement lies not in the oneness of the selves, but in their similarity, because all the selves, being of the nature of consciousness, are similar to one another<sup>24</sup>. The Buddhist view that the self is merely series of ideas without any persisting substratum is, according to the Mīmāṃsakas, untenable. They argue that without a persisting self, the Law of Karman and the Law of Rebirth will be meaningless. The fact of memory also will be unintelligible if the self be impermanent. For the experience of an event occurring at an earlier point of time and the remembrance of the same at a later point of time must point to the same agent. Further, the facts of self-consciousness, desire, pleasure, pain etc. could not be explained if the self were merely a chain of fleeting cognitions<sup>25</sup>.

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## CHAPTER

# 7

## THE SELF IN NYĀYA-VAIŚEṢIKA

### Introduction

Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika is a realistic and pluralistic school of philosophy. This system holds that all the objects known by valid knowledge have ontological reality, and that every entity is different from every other entity of the universe. An atom is a real entity, and every atom is different not only from every other category but also from every other atom. In a like manner, the self is also a real entity, and every self is different from every other self as well as from every other category. Thus, according to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas, Īśvara, the self and matter are all ontological realities, because they are known by valid knowledge, and each of these realities is distinct from the others.

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas have divided all the substances into nine kinds, namely, *pṛthivī* or earth, *ap* or water, *tejas* or fire, *vāyu* or air, *ākāśa* or space, *kāla* or time, *dik* or direction, *ātman* or the self and *manas* or the mind<sup>1</sup>. Of them, *ātman* has been divided into two types, namely, *jīvātman* or the individual self and *Paramātman* or the Supreme self or God. The *jīvātman* is infinite in number and is different in every individual, while *Paramātman* is only one<sup>2</sup>.

### Nature of the Self

The Naiyāyikas use the term '*ātman*' to denote both the self and God. For, according to them, *ātman* means 'the locus

of *jñāna* or knowledge', and both the self and God share this nature. Again, *ātman* is that which is the substrate of *icchā* or will and *prayatna* or volition. And, as these attributes pertain to both the self and God, both of them are denoted by the term '*ātman*'<sup>3</sup>. Of these two, the self is called *jīvātman*, while God is called *Paramātman*<sup>4</sup>. The self is a real and incorporeal substance. In its real nature, it is *niravayava* or partless and *nitya* or eternal. Being unchangeable and imperishable, it is not subject to origination and destruction.

The self is all-pervasive in magnitude. It cannot be atomic. Had it been so, its qualities like consciousness, will etc., could not be perceived, since the qualities of atomic substances are imperceptible. Moreover, if the self were atomic, it would not be possible for its cognition to extend all over the body. Nor can the self be of intermediate size, because if it were so, it would be subject to origination and destruction. Further, if the self were smaller than the body, it could not occupy the whole body as it actually does; if it were larger than the body, the latter could not contain the former; and if it were equal to the size of the body, then either it could be too small for the body which grows day by day or it would be endowed with growth and development like the body<sup>5</sup>. The self is, therefore, all-pervasive or infinite; it is not located in a particular body and exists in all space. But though the self is all-pervading, its actions and feelings are perceived only in a particular body, since the actions and feelings of the self can be manifested only through a psycho-physical organism. Again, though existing within and outside the body, the self cannot acquire more than one knowledge at the same time because of the atomicity of the *manas* which is the common instrument for all kinds of knowledge<sup>6</sup>.

The self is endowed with freedom of will. It is by its free acts that the self earns merits and demerits. However, the self cannot do anything according to its sweet will, as its present state is conditioned by its earlier actions which are



without any beginning, and because its power is limited by divine will.

In its empirical state, the self is endowed with a body, sense-organs, vital airs, mind and so on, though it is entirely different from all these elements. By the influence of ignorance and the merits and demerits accruing from the past actions or *Karmans* which are without any beginning, the self is endowed with a real ego or *ahamkara* and undergoes bondage. As a result, it is attached to the objects of enjoyment, and acts for the attainment of pleasure and avoidance of pain. Such an empirical self is a real knower, doer and enjoyer, and is thus endowed with the qualities of desire, aversion, volition, pleasure, pain, cognition etc. In other words, all cognitions, feelings and conations belong to the empirical self and not to the noumenal self<sup>7</sup>.

In the state of liberation, however, the self is not affected by ignorance and the *adṛṣṭas* or merits and demerits. In this state, it realises its real nature and is freed from the fetters of body, sense-organs, mind etc. As a result, the self is unaffected by attachment, desire, aversion, volition, feeling etc. which are all connected with the body and the mind. The self in liberation is a pure substance divested not only of pains and ignorance but also of pleasure or bliss and cognition or consciousness<sup>8</sup>.

#### Problem of Bliss and Consciousness as the Qualities of the Self

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas hold that in liberation the self is devoid of bliss or pleasure, because pleasure is always mixed with pain. Uddyotakara argues that if the liberated self is to have eternal pleasure, it must be possessed of an eternal organism, since experience is not possible without an organism<sup>9</sup>. The later Naiyāyikas, of course, hold that a liberated self is endowed with bliss. In the view of Bhāsarvajña and his

followers, Gautama also accepted the existence of bliss in liberation<sup>10</sup>.

According to the Śāṅkarites, the self is of the nature of pure consciousness or consciousness having no relation to any subject or object. But the Naiyāyikas do not accept this view, since, according to them, subject-objectless consciousness is a fiction. Moreover, consciousness, being a quality, cannot exist by itself without a locus or substance. Accordingly, the self—a self-existent reality—cannot be consciousness as such; it is the substratum of consciousness<sup>11</sup>. Consciousness, however, is not an essential attribute of the self. The self is, as a matter of fact, a *jaḍa* or non-conscious principle. But though non-conscious, it has the capability of being endowed with consciousness which can exist only in the self and not in any other substance. The self acquires consciousness when it is associated with a psycho-physical organism. Accordingly, it is only in the empirical or bound state that the self is endowed with consciousness. In its pure or liberated state, the self is divested of consciousness, because at that time it is devoid of any organism<sup>12</sup>.

Of course, though non-conscious, the self is not material, because it is clearly distinguished from matter as a spiritual principle. It seems that when the Naiyāyikas regard the self as non-conscious, they mean that it is devoid of fleeting cognitions. To quote Dr. Radhakrishnan, "The Naiyāyika is anxious that the eternal self should not be identified with fleeting cognitions. The spiritual reality of the self is not to be confused with the transitory mental states"<sup>13</sup>.

#### Proofs for the Existence of the Self

The Naiyāyikas try to prove the existence of the self by means of inference, and refer to the scriptural testimony for its confirmation. Uddyotakara and others hold that the self is

known by perception also, because the notion of 'I' has the self as its object. It is held that though direct perception can prove the existence of the self, inferences are adduced only for strengthening the position<sup>14</sup>.

Thus, the existence of the self is said to be implied by our mental states like imagination, memory, recognition, volition, self-awareness, emotion etc. In other words, the self is inferred as the substratum of these qualities. The Vaiśeṣikas hold that the self can be inferred from inhalation, exhalation, the twinkling of the eye, life, the action of the mind, pleasure, pain, will antipathy, etc<sup>15</sup>. The Naiyāyikas argue that the continued persistence of the self is proved by the recognition of earlier experiences or cognitions as 'mine'. If there were no permanent self, no person could recognise something to have been perceived by him previously, for in that case, the experiencer of the earlier point of time would not exist at the time of recognition<sup>16</sup>. It is further argued that any instrument is necessarily supervised by some agent; and as the sense-organs and the mind are instruments of knowledge, they must be guided by some agent. That agent is the self.

### The Self as Distinct from Psycho-Physical Elements

The self is different from the body, the sense-organs, the mind and the intellect. The body cannot be regarded as the self, because the quality of consciousness, which lies at the root of all the qualities of the self, cannot reside in the body. Thus, in the states of death and trance, consciousness is not experienced, though the body exists. Further, if consciousness be the attribute of the body, the former must exist in all the elements of the latter. And, if all the elements of the body be thus conscious, then it must be said that the consciousness of an individual is a product of the consciousness of the different constituents. Moreover, if the body and its constituent parts

be endowed with consciousness, then all the elements matter must equally be regarded as having consciousness, because there is no difference between the elements of the body and those of matter. Again, if the body be the self, then the body being subject to incessant change, the self also will have to be regarded as an everchanging or impermanent entity. In that case, all moral values will become meaningless, since there will be no persisting self to experience the fruits of its actions<sup>17</sup>. The senses also should not be looked upon as the self, because consciousness, the fundamental attribute of the self, cannot exist in the senses. If consciousness belonged to the senses, an object known by a sense could not be remembered or recognised by a person when that sense does not operate. Thought, imagination etc., which are the special traits of the self, also cannot exist in the senses. Moreover, the senses, being instruments of knowledge, cannot control themselves, nor can they synthesise their experiences. There must, therefore, be some other agent i.e. the self to control them and synthesise their experiences<sup>18</sup>. Neither can the *manas* or mind be regarded as the self. For being an internal instrument of knowledge, the mind also, like the senses, requires to be controlled by some agent. Further, if the *manas* were the self, its quality of consciousness could not be perceived, since the *manas* is atomic in magnitude, and the qualities of atomic substances are imperceptible<sup>19</sup>. Not even *buddhi* or intellect can be considered as the self, because *buddhi* is non-permanent or ever-changing, while the self is permanent. Further, intellect, being a quality and not a substance, cannot be the knower or the self<sup>20</sup>. Thus, none of the elements of the mind-body can be regarded as the self or the substratum of consciousness. The self or the substratum to consciousness, therefore, must be something quite different from these elements.

### Plurality of the Self

The self is not one, but many. It is unique in each indi-

vidual and is thus infinite in number. If there were only one self in all the individuals, then everybody would share the feelings, thoughts, actions etc. of all other individuals. But as all these are different in different individuals, the self must be regarded as different in each organism. In the same way, birth, death, body, sense-organs etc. being different in different individuals, the difference of the selves must be accepted. This difference of the selves is real not only in the empirical state but also in the transcendental level. In other words, in liberation also the selves maintain their distinct identity<sup>21</sup>.

### The Self and God

The selves are distinct not only from one another but also from God. Though the self and God are endowed with the same *jāti* or community called *āmatva*, they are quite distinct from each other, as they are endowed with different capabilities. First, the knowledge, will and action of the *jīva* are non-eternal and limited, while those of God are eternal and unlimited. Secondly, the individual self is subject to joys and sorrows, while God is endowed with eternal bliss. Thirdly, the self performs limited actions with its body and organs, while God performs the cosmic acts of creation, sustenance and destruction. God is the Supreme who rules over the selves in all their activities, associates them with the fruits of their actions, and leads them to liberation in consonance with their spiritual endeavours. The self is not identical with God under any circumstances, as propagated by the Advaita-Vedāntins, nor does it form a part of Him, as some Vaiṣṇava-Vedāntins hold; it is distinct from Him under all circumstances. In liberation also, the self retains its distinct identity<sup>22</sup>.

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## CHAPTER

# 8

## THE SELF IN SĀMĀKHYA

### Introduction

According to the Old Sāmkhya found in the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* the *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* etc., the *puruṣa* or self and *prakṛti*, the material of the world, are not the ultimate realities ; they are nothing but the manifestations of Bhagavat, the Absolute—otherwise called Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa—or of his power, and are therefore dependent upon him<sup>1</sup>. In the Classical Sāmkhya, however, the world has been explained only with reference to *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* described as two distinct and independent principles. No mention has here been made to any other reality higher than these two principles. Accordingly, it is generally held that according to the Classical Sāmkhya, *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* are the fundamental realities. Of them, *puruṣa* means the self, while *prakṛti* is the ultimate material out of which the world evolves.

### Nature of the Self

According to Sāmkhya, the *puruṣa* or self is a pure spirit entirely different from *prakṛti* and its evolutes. The self is, thus, beyond the three qualities—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—belonging to *prakṛti*, and is, consequently, pure and free from merits, demerits, pleasures, pains, delusion, attachment, aversion, desire etc. According to the Naiyāyikas, qualities like pleasure, pain, etc. belong to the self. The Sāmkhyists, on the other hand, hold that these are the qualities of *antaḥ-karāṇa*,

but are falsely ascribed to the self<sup>2</sup>. The self in its real nature is beyond all empirical attributes. It is simple or uncompounded, and is neither the cause nor the effect of anything. The self is unchangeable and immutable. It is eternal in the sense that it is not affected by the change of time, and that it is an uncaused ultimate principle. It is independent and is not supported by anything else. The self is of the nature of consciousness. The fundamental point regarding the nature of the self is that it is always the subject of knowledge, and never an object of it<sup>3</sup>. The self possesses the power of discrimination, and witnesses the modifications of *prakṛti*. Consciousness, however, is not a mode or attribute of the self, as some philosophers like the Naiyāyikas opine, but is the very essence of it. The self should not be regarded as blissful consciousness also, because bliss and consciousness, being different entities, cannot be the essence of the same reality. Further, bliss is but another name of pleasure which belongs to *prakṛti* and, as such, cannot be the essence of the *puruṣa*<sup>4</sup>. Thus, the *puruṣa* is devoid of any and every characteristic of the empirical world ; its nature is absolute and pure consciousness. And, as it is of the nature of pure consciousness, it is *sadā-prakāśa-svarūpa* or always self-manifested. The self is not anything of the world of objects : it is different from matter or the material body, the senses, the mind and the intellect. The self is different from matter, because the latter is the known, the former is the knower. It is different from the senses, since the latter are the instruments of knowing, while the former is the subject thereof. It is different from the *manas*, because the latter is active and composed of *guṇas*, while the former is inactive and devoid of *guṇas*. It is different from the *buddhi*, since the latter is unconscious, while the former is conscious. Though the *puruṣa* is thus different from all these elements, it lies behind them all : it holds together all the different stages of an individual and illuminates the whole sphere of thought and feeling<sup>5</sup>.

The *puruṣa* is not of limited magnitude or *madhyama-parimāṇa*. If it were so, it would be made up of parts and would, consequently, be destructible. Neither can it be atomic in magnitude, because an atomic self cannot account for the fact of our cognition throughout the whole body. Thus, by the method of residue, the self should be regarded as of unlimited size or *vibhu-parimāṇa* i.e. all-pervasive<sup>6</sup>.

The *puruṣa* is not *kartā* or agent, because it is entirely passive or devoid of activity, all activities belonging to *prakṛti* and its products. Actions or movements that seem to pertain to the *puruṣa* are only *aupādhika* or conditional. The self being related to the body, the movement of the latter is ascribed to the former, just as the movement of a pitcher is ascribed to *ghaṭākāśa* or the *ākāśa* confined by a jar<sup>7</sup>. Thus, *kartṛtva* or agency is not natural to the self. But though not *kartā* or agent, the self is *bhoktā* or enjoyer. Actually, however, enjoyment is also not natural to the self; it is ascribed to the empirical self because of *abhimāna* or the egoistic sense which, on its part, is born of *aviveka* or non-discrimination<sup>8</sup>. When true knowledge arises, all the qualities like pleasure, pain, agency, enjoyment etc. wither away, while only pure consciousness remains. In its real nature, the self is eternally free and perfect. Bondage and liberation, birth and death, pleasure and pain—all belong to *prakṛti*, and not to the self<sup>9</sup>.

A world-creator *Īśvara* having been denied by the Sāṃkhyaists, the *puruṣa* cannot be said to have any relation to *Īśvara*, either as his part or as identical with him. *Vijñāna Bhikṣu*, however, regards Brahman, the universal consciousness, as the Absolute, and advocates a relation of difference-cum-identity between the self and Brahman. In his view, in the state of bondage, the self is different from Brahman, but in liberation, the former realises its identity with the latter<sup>10</sup>.

According to the Sāṃkhyaists, the self is not one, but many; it is different in different organisms. The manifoldness of the self is established by the Sāṃkhyaists on the ground of the

difference of empirical facts like birth, death etc. It is thus said, "As birth, death and sense-organs are different in different individuals, as all are not simultaneously engaged in actions, and as the three qualities are found to exist in different individuals in different grades, the self should be accepted as many"<sup>11</sup>. It is, however, to be noted that the arguments put forward by the Sāṃkhyaists prove the multiplicity of the empirical self, and not of the transcendental self. The Mādhvists have led this position to its logical conclusion to show the multiplicity of the transcendental selves also.

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1. cf. *etad bhagavato rūpaṃ brahmaṇaḥ paramātmanaḥ paraṃ pradhānaṃ puruṣam*—*BP*, 3.29,36; *īśvareccā-vaśaḥ so'pi jīvātmā kathyate budhaiḥ*—*Matsya Purāṇa*, 3.27.
2. *para-dharmatve'pi tat-siddhira-vivekā*t—*SS*, 6. 11; see *Aniruddha-vṛtt* and *Bhāṣya* on *SS*, 6.2.10, and *SK* and *STK*, 11.
3. *SK*, *STK* and *Yukti-dīpikā*, 11.
4. *naikasyānanda-cid-rūpatve dvayor bheda*t—*SS*, 5.66; see *SK* and *STK*, 19.
5. *SS*, 6.2, 2.29; *SK*, *STK* and *Yukti-dīpikā*, 17.
6. *SS*, 1.50; *IP*, Vol. II, p. 281.
7. *SK*, 19; *niṣkriyasya tad-asambhavāt*—*SS*, 1.49. See *SK*, 20, 22 and *SS*, 1.51, 1.162 and 1.163.
8. *STK*, 21; *SS*, 105.
9. *SS*, 1.107 and 6.28; *SK*, and *STK*, 62; *IP*, Vol. II, p. 286.
10. *SS*, 5.116.
11. *SK*, 18.



## CHAPTER

# 9

## THE SELF IN YOGA ( PĀTANJALA-YOGA )

### Introduction

There is a great affinity between Sāṃkhya and Yoga. The twenty-five principles of Sāṃkhya have been accepted in Yoga. The theory of creation propounded in Yoga also corresponds more or less to that found in Sāṃkhya. The speciality of Yoga, however, is that it clearly accepts the existence of Īśvara or God. Accordingly, Yoga is generally known as *Seśvara Sāṃkhya* or Theistic Sāṃkhya. Thus, according to Yoga, there are twenty-six principles of reality : Īśvara, *puruṣa*, and the twenty-four principles of *prakṛti* and its evolutes. Of them, *puruṣa* is what is known as the individual self.

### Nature of the Self

According to Yoga, as to Sāṃkhya, the *puruṣa* or self is a spiritual entity and is distinct from *prakṛti*, the material cause of the world. It is neutral ; it has neither any attachment for nor any aversion to anything. It is inactive, as distinct from *prakṛti* which is active. It is of the nature of consciousness, and hence is different from *prakṛti* which is non-conscious<sup>1</sup>. It is selfsame and unchangeable, as opposed to *prakṛti* which is of the nature of eternal change. The self remains unchanged amidst all the modifications of the elements of individuality. It exists by itself and for itself, and hence it has no other end for which it should undergo changes<sup>2</sup>. The *puruṣa* is self-luminous, self-complete and self-satisfied. It is free from

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bondage and liberation ; it is only because of its false identification with *buddhi* that it seems to be undergoing bondage and attaining liberation. The *puruṣa* is all-pervasive ; it is neither atomic nor intermediary in magnitude<sup>3</sup>.

Though the *puruṣa* in its real nature is distinct from the physical body, the senses, the mind and the intellect, in the empirical state, it is neither quite similar to these elements nor quite distinct from them. Thus, the *Vyāsa-bhāṣya* says that the *puruṣa* is not quite dissimilar to the elements of *prakṛti*, because, had it been so, it could not perceive the ideas in the form of mental modification<sup>4</sup>. In other words, in the empirical state, the *puruṣa* identifies itself, as it were, with the mind. *Pañcaśikha*, as quoted in the *Vyāsa-bhāṣya*, says "Not knowing the *puruṣa* beyond the mind to be different therefrom in nature, character knowledge etc., a man has the notion of self in the mind through delusion"<sup>5</sup>. The *puruṣa* is described by Vyāsa as *dṛk* or seer and as *śakti* or power like *prakṛti* itself<sup>6</sup>.

The nature of *puruṣa* found in Yoga, as in Sāṃkhya, is very much similar to that found in Advaita Vedānta. The most remarkable point of difference, however, is that according to Sāṃkhya-Yoga, the self is not one but many, while according to Advaitism, it is one. Patañjali does not say anything on this point ; he has presumed the plurality of the self, as propounded by the Sāṃkhyists<sup>7</sup>. There is no controversy among philosophers about the plurality of the selves in their empirical state. But the Sāṃkhya-Yoga philosophers add that in the transcendental level also, the selves are many. Accordingly, in liberation also, the selves remain distinct from one another as well as from Īśvara or God. Liberation, in this system, does not mean merger of the self in God ; nor does it mean the establishment of some relation with Him. Liberation here means the realisation of the real nature of the self<sup>8</sup>.

### The Self and God

In Yoga, Īśvara or God is regarded as a particular self or

*puruṣa-viśeṣa*<sup>9</sup>. He is not immanent in the selves but transcends them. God in Yoga is, thus, not the inner-self of the selves. The relation between God and the *puruṣa* is, therefore, not inseparable or organic one. The *puruṣas* are eternally existing and all-pervading realities and, hence, are not subject to origination and destruction. They do not come out of *Īśvara*, like the sparks of a blazing fire; nor are they dissolved into him in liberation. The *puruṣas* are quite distinct from *Īśvara*: they are not identical with him; nor are they related to him as his parts. The selves are not governed by *Īśvara*, nor are they dependent upon his grace for getting the fruits of their actions. It is the *adṛṣṭas* or merits and demerits of the selves that give forth the requisite results by bringing about necessary changes in *prakṛti*<sup>10</sup>. *Īśvara* is not the moral governor of the *jīvas*. He does not reward or punish the *jīvas* for their actions; nor does he grant liberation to them. A spiritual aspirant attains liberation by the acquisition of mental equilibrium. And meditation on *Īśvara* or devotion to him is simply one of the means of attaining this mental equilibrium. Bhikṣu says that, of all kinds of conscious meditation, meditation on the Supreme Lord is the highest. Of course, *Īśvara* in Yoga is said to help the devotees indirectly by removing the obstacles standing in the way of their spiritual progress. That means, *Īśvara* does not directly grant liberation; he only facilitates its attainment<sup>11</sup>.

According to Vācaspati Miśra (9th century A. D.) and Vijñāna Bhikṣu, merits and demerits of the *jīvas* can remove the barriers of *prakṛti*, but they cannot put *prakṛti* into action. It is *Īśvara* they say, who activates and guides *prakṛti* for the fulfilment of the ends of the *puruṣas* i.e. for their enjoyment and liberation. Thus, *Īśvara* helps the *puruṣas* attain their ends, by guiding *prakṛti* in the suitable direction<sup>12</sup>. But, as *Īśvara* is not immanent in the selves, he does not inspire them from within; he only helps them from without. Accordingly, the self is not required to aspire for union with *Īśvara*.

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2. aparīṇāmitvam—YSB, 2.20; puruṣo'parīṇāmī—TV on *ibid*.
3. See TV on YS, 1.4, 4.31 and S. N. Dasgupta, *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion*, pp. 19-20.
4. sa buddher na sarūpo nātyanta n virūpaḥ—YSB, 2.20.
5. bhoktr-bhogyā-śaktyor atyanta-vibhaktayor atyantāsaṅkīrṇayoḥ... buddhitaḥ param puruṣam... apaśyan kuryāt tatrātmabuddhiṁ mohena—YSB, 2.6.
6. puruṣo dr̥k-saktiḥ...YSB, 2.6; dr̥śi-mātra iti dr̥k-śaktir eva—*ibid*, 2.20.
7. Dasgupta, *op cit*, p. 30.
8. svarūpa-pratīlambhe tu tayoḥ kaivalyam—YSB, 2.6; kaivalyam svarūpa-pratīṣṭhā vā citi-śaktir iti—YS, 4.34; tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe'vasthānam—YS, 4.3.
9. tasmād yasya sāmyātīśayair vinirmuktam aiśvaryam sa eveśvaraḥ sa puruṣa-viśeṣa iti—YSB, 1.24; kleśa-karma-vipākāśayair aparāmṛṣṭaḥ puruṣa-viśeṣa īśvaraḥ—YS, 1.24.
10. dharmāḥ prakṛtīnām āvaraṇaṁ bhinatti—YSB, 4.3; *Bhoja-vṛtti* on YS, 4.3; Dasgupta, *op cit*, p. 87.
11. īśvara-praṇidhānād vā—YS, 1.23; praṇidhānād bhakti-viśeṣād āvarjita īśvaras tam anugṛhṇāti—YSB on *ibid*.
12. na ca puruṣārtho'pi pravartakaḥ kiṁ tu tadūśeneśvaraḥ—TV, 4.3; īśvaras tu sāmya-parīṇāmādi-rūpākṣilāvaraṇa-bhaṅgena udbodhokaḥ—YV on *ibid*.

## CHAPTER

# 10

### THE SELF IN VIJÑĀNA BHIKṢU'S PHILOSOPHY

#### Introduction

Vijñāna Bhikṣu (16th century A. D.) propagates a philosophy which is a type of *bhedābheda*. He does not accept the difference-less Brahman of Śaṅkara as the sole and absolute reality. Nor does he accept the *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* of Sāṃkhya as the ultimate principles. Like Rāmānuja, he accepts three *tattvas* or ultimate principles, namely, *prakṛti*, *puruṣa* and Brahman. *Prakṛti* is the ultimate non-conscious dynamic principle and the material cause of the material world; *puruṣa* or the self is the static principle of pure consciousness; and Brahman, the universal pure consciousness, is the Absolute, being the common substratum of both *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. For the creation of a purposeful world, the two independent principles of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* are required to come in contact with each other and act in a harmonious way. This conjunction between *prakṛti* and the *puruṣa* and the harmony in their actions are superintended, according to Bhikṣu, by Brahman<sup>1</sup>.

#### Nature of the Self

According to Bhikṣu, the self is a real part of Brahman, and emerges from it just as a spark emanates from a blazing fire. Being a part of Brahman, the universal pure consciousness, the self derives from it the nature of consciousness. Though the consciousness of the self is all-pervasive like that of Brah-

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man, in the empirical state, it is limited by the adjunct of *buddhi*. Consciousness is not the attribute of the self, but the very essence of it<sup>2</sup>: it is a substance which illuminates the not-self. Like consciousness, the activity of the self is also derived from Brahman. Bliss, however, is not the essence of the self, as the Śaṅkarites hold. Bhikṣu argues that bliss, being a modification or effect of *prakṛti*, cannot be the essence of the self which is not an effect. Moreover, as the self is of the nature of consciousness, it cannot, at the same time, be of the nature of bliss. It should not be argued that consciousness is essentially bliss, because acquisition of knowledge does not necessarily bring pleasure with it<sup>3</sup>. Further, if the self be of the nature of bliss, it will have to be regarded as both the agent and the object of the enjoyment of bliss. The Śaṅkarite view that in liberation the self attains bliss is not supported by Bhikṣu. He argues that it is not possible for the self to enjoy bliss during liberation, since at that time it is devoid of any organ, internal or external. Bliss ascribed to the state of liberation by the scriptures means, according to Bhikṣu, simply negation of pains, and not positive bliss<sup>4</sup>. Neither can it be said that in the empirical state, the self is endowed with bliss. For the self, being eternal, unchangeable and transcendental, cannot be influenced by the joys and sorrows of the world. Pleasures and pains belong to the internal organ i.e. *antah-karaṇa* or *buddhi*, but are super-imposed on the empirical self, as a result of which the latter seems to be endowed with these qualities. Actually, however, the self is not touched by them<sup>5</sup>.

The self is an active agent. If it were not free to act, the Vedic injunctions and prohibitions would be meaningless. In its essence, however, the self is passive; it seems to be active only because of its conjunction with *mahat*, *ahamkāra* etc. This conjunction, on its part, is caused by *adṛṣṭa* or the fruits of the past actions of the self. In reality, activity lies in *buddhi* but is attributed to the self through *aviveka* or indiscrimination<sup>6</sup>.

The self is not one, but many, since the *Śruti* declares,

"Many souls are born out of the Supreme Person"<sup>7</sup>. The self is atomic, because the *Śruti* asserts that the self departs from a body at the time of death, and returns to its embodied existence at the time of the next birth. If the self were all-pervasive, it could not depart; nor could it return. Further, the *Śruti* says, "This atomic self should be known through the *manas*", "The self is to be known as the hundredth part of the hundredth part of a tip of hair" etc. The *Vedic* statement, "The *ātman* is neither gross nor minute" relates, according to Bhikṣu, to Brahman which is also called *ātman*. The atomic self resides in the heart and pervades the whole body through its quality of knowledge. Essentially, however, the self is all-pervading. It seems to be atomic in the empirical state because of its conjunction with the *upādhis* like *mahat*, *ahamkāra* etc. In liberation, the all-pervasive nature of the self is again revealed<sup>8</sup>.

### The Self and Brahman

The self emerges from Brahman, subsists in it and again merges into it. Brahman is the primary principle of pure consciousness, and the individual self, which is also of the nature of pure consciousness, derives its existence from it. During *pralaya*, the self remains merged in Brahman as indistinguishable from it. At the time of creation, it emanates from the bosom of Brahman, just as a spark emanates from fire. Thus, the self is the *aṁśa* or part, and Brahman is the *aṁśin* or whole. Bādarāyaṇa clearly says, "The self is a part of Brahman, since it is described as many by the *Śruti*"<sup>9</sup>. That the self is an *aṁśa* of Brahman means that the two entities are inseparable from each other like the sun and its rays. Like Jīva Goswāmi, Bhikṣu regards the self as the power or attribute of Brahman. And, as power or attribute may be regarded as a part of its substratum, the self also may be regarded as a part of Brahman.

Now, as the whole and the part are both different and non-different from each other, Brahman and the self are also both different and non-different. Again, just as a powerful entity and its power, or a luminous body and its lustre, or a substance and its attribute are both different and non-different, so Brahman and the self are both different and non-different<sup>10</sup>. In other words, though the self is different from Brahman, it has no separate or independent existence of its own. Of course, in the empirical state, the self, being veiled by nescience, cannot realise its non-difference from Brahman. When this nescience is destroyed by spiritual practices, the knowledge of non-difference is again manifested. Non-difference, for Bhikṣu, is not identity but non-separate-ness. It consists in having the same characteristics or manifested attributes, while difference consists in possessing different characteristics or manifested attributes. Thus, Brahman and the self are non-different, because they are essentially similar, both being formless, changeless and of the nature of self-manifest consciousness. Also, they are different, since they are endowed with different characteristics. Brahman is infinite and endowed with unlimited power, while the self is atomic and possessed of limited power; Brahman is the controller, while the self is the controlled; and Brahman is the substratum, while the self is its attribute.

The *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* says, "Brahman is distinct from the entire universe comprising the material things and the individual selves, but nothing is distinct from it". Again, it says, "Its pure and supreme abode, which lies beyond the selves and *prakṛti*, is visioned by the liberated selves"<sup>11</sup>. This means that Brahman and the self are not absolutely identical but are both identical and different. Further, Bhikṣu holds that the significance of the *Upaniṣads* and the *Brahman-sūtra* lies not in the absolute identity between Brahman and the self, but in their identity-cum-difference, since they are said to be related as whole and part. The *Śruti* says that the self, like *prakṛti*,



merges in Brahman, indicating thereby that Brahman and the self are non-different from each other. Bādarāyaṇa also maintains in the *Brahma-sūtra* that Brahman and the self are non-different. Again, the *Śruti* says that Brahman is the lord of all and that it lies beyond the selves. Bādarāyaṇa also says, "Brahman is greater than the selves, as the latter are asserted by the *Śruti* as different from Brahman". Brahman and the self are thus both identical and different<sup>12</sup>.

It is asked : Brahman being partless, how can the self be regarded as its part ? To this, Bhikṣu replies that, on the strength of the scriptures, Brahman must be regarded as possessed of parts. The *Śruti* declares, "All creatures form one quarter of him", "The whole world is pervaded by his parts", and so on. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* also says, "The selves are eternal parts of God". Bādarāyaṇa, too, maintains that the self is a part of Brahman<sup>13</sup>. Bhikṣu, therefore, asserts that the self is a part of Brahman and is non-different from it, just as the son is a part of his father and is non-different from him in the sense that throughout the whole span of life, the son remains related to his father through the relation of son-ship. Further, the self acquires consciousness from Brahman, just as a son acquires consciousness from his father<sup>14</sup>.

It is held by the opponents that if the self were a part of Brahman, it would not be subject to misery, just as the ray of the sun cannot be cold. Bhikṣu replies that though the self is a part of Brahman and is of the nature of pure consciousness, it is subjected to misery because of its contact with the psycho-physical organism, just as the ray of the sun coming in contact with the moon becomes cool, or just as water coming in contact with salt becomes saline<sup>15</sup>.

Bhikṣu holds that, in reality, there is only one Supreme Self which is the whole, all the selves forming its parts. These parts or selves reflected in the adjuncts called *buddhi* are revealed as the empirical selves. The *Śruti* says, "One Supreme Self exists in all creatures and looks like many reflections of the

moon in different vessels of water". Here it is notable that Bhikṣu does not regard the self as a reflection of Brahman in *buddhi*, as some, Śāṅkarites do. In his view, it is the conscious selves forming parts of Brahman that are reflected in the adjuncts called *buddhi*<sup>16</sup>.

According to the Avaccheda-vāda or the Theory of Limitation held by some Advaitins, the self is nothing but Brahman limited by the *upādhi* or adjunct called *avidyā* or individual nescience or by its product called *antaḥ-karāṇa* or the internal organ. This theory holds that Brahman limited by *māyā* or cosmic nescience is Īśvara or God, while Brahman limited by *avidyā* or individual nescience or by the *antaḥ-karāṇa* is the self.

Bhikṣu refutes this view by the following arguments :

1. This theory holds that reality is only one, while the *Śruti* states that Brahman and the self are two realities. Accordingly, none of them is the limitation of the other. Thus, the *Śruti* says, "Of the two beautiful birds residing in the same tree, one ( i. e. the self ) eats sweet fruits, while the other ( i. e. Brahman ) merely looks on, without eating". The Theory of Limitation, therefore, goes against the *Śruti*<sup>17</sup>.

2. The view that Īśvara and the self are different only because of their *viśeṣaṇas* or qualifying adjuncts is not tenable. It may be asked whether the qualified being is distinct from the qualifying adjuncts or not. (a) If distinct, in the *Śruti*, 'That thou art', 'that' or qualified Brahman and 'thou' or the self cannot denote one reality i. e. unqualified Brahman, because these two terms—'that' and 'thou'—have got two different denotations. It is argued that, here, through *lakṣaṇā* or implication, both the terms 'that' and 'thou' mean the common entity i. e. the unqualified transcendental pure consciousness. Bhikṣu counters that, in that case, it will not be possible for the self to terminate its nescience and the consequent false identification with the psycho-physical organism by hearing the monistic texts of the *Śruti*. That means, implication, being not the true meaning



longs. If nescience is said to abide in Brahman, it will go against such *Vedic* passages as, "Brahman is fearless and devoid of false knowledge" and others which deny the existence of nescience in Brahman. Moreover, if Brahman be the locus of nescience, it will be ignorant or limited in knowledge, while the *Śruti* always asserts that the knowledge of Brahman knows no bound. Further, Brahman, being of the nature of self-luminous infinite knowledge, cannot be the substratum of nescience<sup>26</sup>. If, again, it is said that the self is the locus of ignorance, and that Brahman is reflected in the self's ignorance, then it will involve the fallacy of mutual dependence. Thus, for proving the reality of the self, reference is made to the difference between the archetype or Brahman and the reflection or the self caused by illusion. Again, for proving the illusion of the difference between the two, reference is made to the reality of the self<sup>27</sup>. 7. The Theory of Reflection stands in direct opposition to the *Śruti*, the *Smṛtis* and the *Brahma-sūtra* of Bādarāyaṇa. All these texts regard the self as a part of Brahman, while a reflection of Brahman can never be regarded as a part thereof. Bādarāyaṇa says, "The self is a part of Brahman, since the latter is asserted by the *Śruti* to be many". 8. In the aphorism "The self is a mere *abhāsa*", the term '*abhāsa*' does not mean 'reflection', as the Śāṅkarites hold, because, first, this term is never used in this sense, and, secondly, this meaning will contradict the other *sūtras* which regard the self as a part of Brahman. It is more reasonable, Bhikṣu says, to take the term '*abhāsa*' in the sense of 'self-luminous light of consciousness'<sup>28</sup>.

Thus, Bhikṣu concludes that the self cannot be regarded as a limitation of Brahman; nor can it be considered as a reflection thereof. For him, the self is a real part of Brahman, and is, therefore, both identical with and different from it.

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3. naikasyānanda-cid-rūpatve virodhāt iti sāmkhya-sūtrokta-nyāyāc ca—*BSV*, 1.1.2.
4. sukhaṁ sukha-duḥkhātyayaḥ—*BSV*, 1.1.2; ātmatvasyā'pi prema-prayojakatvāt duḥkha-nivṛtti-rūpatvād vā bodhyam—*ibid*; cetana mokṣasya sukha-rūpatvam apāstam—*ibid*; duḥkha-nivṛtti-eva puruṣārthaḥ—*ibid*.
5. buddheḥ sukha-duḥkhaḥ poṣaṇaṁ buddher bhogaḥ...ayam eva bhogaś cetane pratibimbati—*ibid*, 1.1.2.
6. jīvo buddhi-kartṛtvād eva upādhi-vaśāt kartā, svatas tu paramārtha-taḥ akartā—*ibid*, 2.3.4; see also *ibid*, 1.3.37.
7. bahvīḥ prajāḥ puruṣāt samprasūtāḥ—see *ibid*, 2.3.42-43.
8. svata ānanyam aupādhika-paricchedāpagama-mātram—*ibid*, 2.3.29; paricchinnā-vikāra-vigame sati...vibhutvābhivyaktiḥ—*ibid*; see *ibid*, 2.3.19-29, 43.
9. amśo nānā vyapadeśāt—*BS*, 2.3.43.
10. jīva-brahmaṇor amśāmsī-bhāva eva—*BSV*, 2.3.28; agni-sphuliṅga-vat amśāmsī-abhedaḥ—*ibid*, 2.3.26; tathā śaktiśaktimad-avibhāgo'pi nitya eva—*ibid*; jīvaḥ saha brahma prakāśa-tadāśrayavad abhinnaṁ—*ibid*, amśāmsīnoś ca bheda-bhedaḥ vibhāga-vibhāga-rūpeṇa—*ibid*, 1.1.2.
11. parasya brahmaṇo rūpaṁ puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ, paśyanti surayaḥ śuddhaṁ tad-viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam—*Viṣṇu-Purāṇa*, 1.1.15, 16.
12. See *BSV* on 'adhikaṁ tu bheda-nirdeśāt'—*BS*.
13. pādo'sya sarvā bhūtāni—*Ch Up*, 3.12.5; mamaivamśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ—*BG*, 15.7; see 1 above.
14. ...pitṛs ca putra iti, sarve ca jīvāḥ pitari putra-cetanā iva—*BSV*, 1.1.2; cf. jīva-brahmaṇor amśāmsī-bhāvas taylor abhedaś ca pitā-putravād eva iti bhīvaḥ—*YV*, 1.26.
15. yathā jyotiḥ-sāmānyasya amśataḥ candra-maṇḍala-sambandhāt śaityaṇujñā—*BSV*, 2.3.48.
16. tattvataḥ eka evātmā...ekaḥ paramātmā amśāmsī-vibhāgena upādhiṣu pratibimbataḥ...jīvaḥ paramātmanaḥ pratibimba iti bhramo na kāryaḥ...cetanānām sva-svopādhaḥ pratibimbasyaiva lābhāt—*ibid*, 3.2.18.
17. avaccheda-vāde'pi 'taylor-anyaḥ pippalaṁ svādv-atty-anaśnannanyo' 'bhicākaśīti' ityadi-vibhāganupapattēḥ, dharmiṇaḥ ekatvāt—*ibid*, 1.1.2.

18. viśiṣṭasya atireke bhavad-abhimatasya tat-tvamasy-ādi-vākyārthasya akhaṇḍatvasya anupapatteḥ—*ibid.*, 1.1.2; vākyārthayoḥ viśiṣṭayoḥ atiriktatayā kevala-caitanye tatastha-lakṣaṇapattau jīvasya dehādy-abhimāna-nivṛtṭy-asambhavāt—*ibid.*, 1.1.2.
19. ekasmin eva ātmani avaccheda-bhedena bandha-mokṣaiśvaryādi-prasaktyā—*ibid.*, 1.1.2.
20. muktasya punaḥ bandhāpattiḥ...yathā eka-ghaṭāvacchinnākāśasya tadghaṭa-bhaṅge api ghaṭāntareṇa punaḥ sambandhaḥ bhavati—*ibid.*
21. nirañjanaḥ paramaṁ sāmyam upaiti...mokṣa-kāle api bhedaghaṭitam sāmyaṁ śrūyate—*ibid.*
22. pratibimbasya tucchatayā bandha-mokṣānucityāt—*ibid.*
23. jñānena upādhi-viyoge jīva-nāśa-prasaṅgāt—*ibid.*
24. sad-asatoḥ abhedānupapatteḥ—*ibid.*
25. bandha-mokṣānupapatti-tādavasthāt—*ibid.*
26. brahmaṇaḥ bhrāntatve—brahmaṇi ajñāna-pratiśedhasya virodhāt—*ibid.*
27. bhrameṇa bimba-pratibimba-bheda-siddhau jīva-siddhiḥ, jīva-siddhau ca tadāśrayasya bhramasya siddhiḥ—*ibid.*
28. pratibimba-vāde amśa-śruti-smṛti-sūtrāṇāṁ virodhaḥ syāt—*ibid.*; ābhāsa-śabdaḥ na pratibimba-vāci—kim tu prakāśavāci—*ibid.*

## CHAPTER

## 11

## THE SELF IN ŚAṆKARA VEDĀNTA

## Introduction

According to Śaṅkara ( 7th/8th century A. D. ) Brahman is the only, the supreme and the most perfect reality. The world of manifold-ness is said to be existing only from the phenomenal point of view, while from the transcendental point of view, it is without any existence. Again, though the real self or *ātman* is identical with Brahman<sup>1</sup>, the empirical individual selves are mere appearances. It is *māyā*, the cosmic nescience, which is responsible for the appearance of the material world and the empirical selves.

## Nature of the self

Pure consciousness or *caitanya* is the essence of the self. It is not the consciousness of any particular form but is pure consciousness or awareness common to all forms of knowledge. And, consciousness being self-luminous, the self is essentially self-luminous. It is pure light or clear radiance which reveals itself even when there is no object. Even in deep sleep and fainting, the self exists, as is inferred from such later recognition as 'I slept happily for a long time' etc<sup>2</sup>. Pure consciousness is identical with existence and bliss. The conception of existence involves the ideas of truth, eternality, immutability and completeness. The self is, therefore, unconditionally true, eternal, unchangeable and self-complete.

18. viśiṣṭasya atireke bhavad-abhimatasya tat-tvamasy-ādi-vākyārthasya akhaṇḍatvasya anupapatteḥ—*ibid.*, 1.1.2; vākyārthayoḥ viśiṣṭayoḥ atiriktatayā kevala-caitanye tatastha-lakṣaṇapattau jīvasya dehādy-abhimāna-nivṛtṭy-asambhavāt—*ibid.*, 1.1.2.
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The self is eternal and exists in all the three points of time—past, present and future. It is *kūṭastha* or unchangeable and exists in the same nature for ever. In its essence, it is not subjected to bondage and sufferings, because it is of the nature of pure knowledge and bliss<sup>3</sup>. It is omnipresent, universal and infinite, because true consciousness is without any limitation. The self is *vibhu* or all-pervasive; it is not conditioned by time and space. It is neither atomic nor intermediary in size. If the self were atomic, it could not pervade all the parts of the body, and the quality of consciousness could not be perceived in the whole body. Actually, however, consciousness is perceived in the whole body. The self is, therefore, not atomic. Neither can it be regarded as of intermediary size. If it were so, it would be subject to destruction, while all the scriptures declare it to be eternal i.e. not subject to origination and destruction<sup>4</sup>.

The self is one; it is the same self that exists in all beings. It is out of ignorance that the self is regarded as many or different in different individuals<sup>5</sup>.

The self is without any quality; the qualities that seem to pertain to the self are only apparent. The self is devoid of action, because action involves an idea of change in the subject i.e. the self in which it resides, while the self is changeless. *Kartṛtva* or agency and *bhokṛtva* or enjoyment are not possible in the self, because these characteristics bring with them the ideas of action and change in the self<sup>6</sup>.

### The Empirical self

The self conditioned either by *avidyā* (individual nescience) or by the *antahkarana* (internal organ) is revealed as the *jīva* or empirical self. It is this empirical self that performs actions, enjoys their fruits and undergoes birth and rebirth. This is indicated by the aphorism '*kartā śāstrārthavattā*', which means

that the *Vedic* injunctions become meaningful only when the agency of the *jīva* is accepted<sup>7</sup>.

The *jīva* is, in essence, identical with Brahman, and is not subject to origination and destruction. If the *jīva* be regarded as produced, then we shall have to accept the destruction of the fruits of actions previously done (*kṛta-karma-nāśa*), and also the enjoyment of the fruits of actions not previously done (*akṛta-karma-bhoga*)<sup>8</sup>. Though the self, being essentially identical with Brahman, is pure, it seems to be subject to the worldly defects because of *avidyā*.

The *jīva* is the *pramātṛ* or knower *kartṛ* or doer and *bhokṛ* or enjoyer<sup>9</sup>. It acquires merits and demerits according to its good and bad deeds, and experiences their fruits. Accordingly, it is subject to transmigration and bondage. Such a bound self attains liberation through the acquisition of real knowledge.

The *jīva* is said to have three *śarīras* or bodies: *ajñāna* is its *kāraṇa-śarīra* or causal body; the five sense-organs, five motor-organs, five vital-airs, *manas* and *buddhi* form the *sūkṣma-śarīra* or subtle body; and the five material elements form its *sthūla-śarīra* or gross body. In the waking stage, the self is endowed with the gross and the subtle bodies and is called *viśva*; in the dream-stage, it is endowed with the subtle body and is called *taijasa*; and in the stage of deep sleep, it is endowed with the causal body and is called *prājña*<sup>10</sup>.

As regards the question whether the *jīva* is one or many, there are differences of opinion among the Advaitins. Most of them hold that the *jīva* is many, because the adjunct of the *jīva*, namely, the internal organ or the individual nescience is different in different individuals. They further argue that the plurality of the *jīvas* must be maintained in order to distinguish between the bound and the released *jīvas*<sup>11</sup>.

Sureśvarācārya, who propounds the *Dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda* or the Theory of Perception-is-Creation, upholds the view that the entire universe is like a dream-land created by the imagination of the *jīva*. That means, only the perceiver is real, while all

other objects, including other *jīvas*, are illusory. According to him, therefore, the *jīva* is not many but one ; other *jīvas* as well as their bondage and liberation are all illusory. This is called Eka-*jīva-vāda* or the Theory of Single *jīva*<sup>12</sup>.

Another group of Eka-*jīva-vādins* holds that Hiranyagarbha, who is a reflection of Brahman, is the only principal *jīva*, while all other *jīvas* are his mere reflections. This view is called Saviśeṣāneka-śarīraika-*jīva-vāda* i. e. the Theory of Single *jīva* with Many Distinct Bodies<sup>13</sup>.

Another section of the Eka-*jīva-vādins* holds that, as there are different Hiranyagarbhas in different creations, it is not possible to determine as to who of them is the principal *jīva*. These thinkers hold that the 'single *jīva*' is one who animates all the bodies without any distinction. This view is, therefore, called Aviśeṣāneka-śarīraika-*jīva-vāda* i. e. the Theory of Single *jīva* with Many Distinctionless Bodies<sup>14</sup>.

### The Sākṣin

The later Vedāntists accept an intermediate stage called *sākṣin* or witness-self in between the *jīva* or empirical self and the *ātman* or the transcendental self. This *sākṣin* is different from both the *jīva* and the *ātman*.

Vidyārāṇyamuni holds that the witness-self is of the nature of unchanging and immutable consciousness, and is the substratum of the subtle and the gross bodies. It is the inactive spectator in the *jīva*, and is possessed of immediate intuition. It does not act, but remains witness to the acts of the *jīva*. It illumines the body, *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahaṅkāra* etc., and shines even when these elements cease to function, as in deep sleep. This witness-self accounts for the facts of personal identity, memory, recognition etc. It is the substratum of the illusion of the *jīva* in its false identification with the ego<sup>15</sup>.

According to Dharmarājadhvarīndra, the witness-self is the eternal consciousness conditioned (*upahita*) by the internal

organ. The internal organ is here the *upādhi* or condition which does not enter into the being of the eternal consciousness, but simple qualifies it. A *jīva*, on the other hand, is the eternal consciousness confined (*avacchinna*) by the internal organ. The internal organ is here a *viśeṣana* or qualification which enters into the being of eternal consciousness<sup>16</sup>. The *jīva* being many, the witness-self forming the foundation of the *jīva* is also different in different *jīvas*<sup>17</sup>. The *ātman* or real self is pure, universal and eternal consciousness neither conditioned nor qualified. Thus, the later Vedāntins distinguish the *sākṣin* from the empirical self or *jīva* as well as from the transcendental self or *ātman*.

Śāṅkara, however, does not make any distinction between the *ātman* and the *sākṣin* or witness-self. He regards the Universal Self immanent in the *jīva* as the witness-self. Commentators like Vācaspati Miśra and others also hold the same view. According to them, *ātman* conditioned by the mind-body-complex is called *jīva*, the empirical self, whereas *ātman* in its pure, unconditioned and transcendental state is called *sākṣin* or the witness-self. It is only in the later Advaita Vedānta that the true self is distinguished from the witness-self as well as from the *jīva*<sup>18</sup>.

The author of *Kaumudī* says that the *sākṣin* is a special form of Īśvara and the indifferent spectator in the *jīva*. The authors of *Tattva-śuddhi* and *Tattva-pradīpikā* hold that the witness-self is the pure and unqualified Brahman and the substratum of all the *jīvas*<sup>19</sup>.

### The Self and Brahman

Intrinsically, the *jīva* and Brahman are one : the reality underlying the universe is identical with the reality underlying the empirical self or *jīva*. Thus, the *Śruti* says that *sat* or the Existence entered (*anuprāviśat*) into *buddhi* or intellect and



became the *jīva*<sup>20</sup>. When *Īśvara*\*, the World-Creator, and the *jīva* are considered apart from their adjuncts—the cosmic nescience and the individual nescience or mind-body—they are identical. With the realisation of this identity, the transmigratory status of the *jīva* and the creator-status of *Īśvara* disappear. The *Upaniṣadic* passage 'That thou art' declares that their is an unqualified identity between the self and Brahman<sup>21</sup>.

The renowned simile of two birds—one tasting the fruits, sweet or bitter, the other looking on indifferently—seems to refer to a distinction between *Īśvara* and the *jīva*. But Śaṅkara holds that this description refers not to the ontological status either of *Īśvara* or of the *jīva*, but to their empirical status<sup>22</sup>.

The description of the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* that the *jīvas* emerge from Brahman, like innumerable sparks coming out of a blazing fire, appears to indicate the relation of part-and-whole between the *jīva* and Brahman. Śaṅkara, however, argues that here the status of the *jīva* is like that of pot-ether, house-ether etc. In other words, the *jīva* mentioned here is the empirical self conditioned by the mind-body, and not the transcendental self<sup>23</sup>. Now, in the empirical plane, Brahman or *Īśvara* and the *jīva* are in a sense different from each other. In the aphorism 'adhikaṁ tu bhedanirdeśāt', the *Brahma-sūtra* clearly states that *Īśvara* is different from and greater than the *jīva*. Śaṅkara echoes the same idea when he says, "O Lord, though there is no difference between You and me, I am Yours and not You are mine"<sup>24</sup>. It is with reference to this empirical plane of the *jīva* and *Īśvara* that they are declared as *aṁśa* or the part and *aṁśin* or the whole. In reality, Brahman being essentially

\* In the philosophy of Śaṅkara, *nirguṇa* or unqualified Brahman is the Absolute, while *saguṇa* or qualified Brahman i.e. Brahman endowed with *māyā* is an empirical representation of the Absolute, which is connected with the cosmic activities. This empirical representation of Brahman is called *Īśvara*.

impartite, the idea of part-and-whole does not apply to it. But the empirical self conditioned by the adjuncts of body, mind etc. individualises itself and maintains the idea of its difference from Brahman. Such a self looks upon itself as finite, limited and subject to joys and sorrows<sup>25</sup>.

Now, the problem is : how can the infinite Universal Self of the nature of untainted knowledge and bliss become the limited individual self endowed with tainted knowledge and bliss ? Śaṅkara says that the Universal Self does not actually become the individual self, but simply seems to be so. And it is *avidyā* or ignorance—which has no beginning—that is responsible, he says, for this false representation.

For explaining this position, Śaṅkara takes the help of two types of images. He describes the individual self sometimes as a limitation of Brahman by the internal organ, like the limitation of *ākāśa* or space by a jar or a house<sup>26</sup>, and sometimes as a reflection of Brahman in nescience, like the reflection of the sun in water. As Śaṅkara uses these two images without any reservation, it is logical to think that he has not made any difference between these two images, and that he has not taken the direct meanings of the images. What he means to indicate by these images is nothing but his fundamental thesis that the empirical self is merely an appearance, and that in essence the self is identical with the Absolute.

The later Advaitins are, however, divided into two groups, one following the Avaccheda-vāda or the Theory of Limitation, the other following the Pratibimba-vāda or The Theory of Reflection.

According to the followers of the Avaccheda-vāda, like Vācaspati Miśra and others, Brahman limited by the adjunct of cosmic *avidyā* or *māyā* (nescience) is *Īśvara*, while that limited by the individual *avidyā* (nescience) or its product *antah-karaṇa* (the mind) is the *jīva*. The *jīva* is a limitation of Brahman, like *ākāśa* or space limited by a jar or a house. Now *ākāśa*, being all-pervasive, cannot be limited by anything.

yet it is conceived to be limited by such adjuncts as the jar, the house etc. So long as the jar exists, the *ākāśa* confined by it remains different from the *ākāśa* confined by the house. When all these limitations are destroyed, this limited *ākāśa* becomes identical with the unlimited *ākāśa*. In the same way, when the adjunct of *avidyā* or its product *antaḥkaraṇa* is destroyed, the *jīva* becomes identical with Brahman<sup>27</sup>.

In the view of the followers of the Pratibimba-vāda, like Prakāśātmayati and others, the *jīva* is a *pratibimba* or reflection of Brahman in *antaḥkaraṇa* (the internal organ) or in *avidyā* (individual nescience). And, as there is no difference between *bimba* or prototype and the *pratibimba* or reflection, the *jīva* is non-different from Brahman<sup>28</sup>, just as the face reflected in the mirror is not different from the prototype i. e. the face. The fact that the reflection vanishes when the mirror is taken away should not be taken to mean that the reflection is false. The Vedāntists argue that it is the location of the reflection in the reflecting locus that is illusory, and not the reflection itself<sup>29</sup>. It is contended by some thinkers that the colourless and non-material Brahman cannot be reflected in the colourless medium i. e. nescience. To this, the Vedāntins reply that, just as the non-material and colourless ether qualified by the clouds, stars etc. is reflected in water, so Brahman qualified by *māyā* is reflected in nescience. In support of this view, the Vedāntins refer to such scriptural texts as 'It is seen as one and many like the moon in water' etc<sup>30</sup>. It is claimed that the *Brahma-Sūtra* also expresses this idea by the simile of the reflection of the sun in different locit.

Among the followers of the Theory of Reflection, however, there are some differences. According to Sarvajñātmamuni, the unconditioned Brahman reflected in *māyā* is *Īśvara* and that reflected in *antaḥkaraṇa* is the *jīva*<sup>31</sup>. To the authors of *Tattva-viveka* and *Prakāśārtha-vivaraṇa*, Brahman reflected in *māyā*, in which pure *sattva* predominates, is *Īśvara*, while

that reflected in *avidyā*\*, in which impure *sattva* predominates, is the *jīva*<sup>32</sup>. Thus, according to these thinkers, *śuddha* Brahman is the *bimba*, while both *Īśvara* and the *jīva* are *pratibimbās*. Prakāśātmayati and his followers, however, hold that *ajñāna* being one, there cannot be two separate reflections of Brahman in it. They say that Brahman associated with *māyā* is *Īśvara*, and *Īśvara* reflected in *ajñāna* is the *jīva*. Thus, according to them, *Īśvara*, and not Brahman, is the *bimba*, while the *jīva* is the *pratibimba*<sup>33</sup>.

According to both these theories, namely the Theory of Reflection and the Theory of Limitation, the empirical self can be regarded as a part of Brahman only from the empirical standpoint. From the transcendental point of view, however, Brahman is impartite, and, hence, the concept of part-and-whole is not at all applicable to it.

In any case, the empirical self is a creation of nescience, and when this nescience is destroyed, the *jīva* realises itself as identical with Brahman. Accordingly, those who strictly follow the Advaita line of thought would reject both the Theory of Reflection and the Theory of Limitation. To them, it is because of *avidyā* that Brahman is mistaken as the *jīva*, like the child-prince who, lost from his kingdom and brought up among the hunters, forgot his identity<sup>34</sup>. This idea has been expressed by Sureśvarācārya in his *Ābhāsa-vāda*. In this *Ābhāsa-vāda*, Sureśvarācārya takes the Theory of Reflection to its extreme end and holds that the *jīva* is only an *ābhāsa* or appearance. While the followers of the Vivaraṇa school regard the reflection as real and identical with the prototype, Sureśvarācārya looks upon it as wholly illusory. It can here be asked : If the *jīva* is wholly illusory, how can there be identity

\* According to these thinkers, there is a difference between *māyā* and *avidyā*. *Māyā* means the universal nescience, the adjunct of *Īśvara*, whereas *avidyā* means the individual nescience, the adjunct of the *jīva*.

between Brahman, the real, and *jīva*, the unreal? To this, Sureśvarācārya replies that the identity between these two is established through the sublation or negation of the *jīva*<sup>35</sup>.

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19. paramēśvarasya eva rūpabhedaḥ kaścit...svayam udāsīnaḥ—*SLS*, pp. 245, 249.
20. tat sṛṣṭvā tadevānuprāviśat—*Taittirīya Up*, 2.6.
21. ...tattvam asīti śrutau śṛṇu...śuddhaṁ kūṭastham advaitaṁ bodhaya-tyādarāt param. tattvam cḥ padayor aikyam—*Tattvopadeśa*, 40-42.
22. dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā samānaṁ brkṣaṁ pariśasvajāte. tayor anyāḥ pippalaṁ svādv-atty-anaśnannanyo'bhicākaśīti—*Muṇḍaka, Up*, 3.1.1.
23. yathā sudiptāt pāvakād visphuliṅgāḥ sahasraśaḥ prabhavante sarūpāḥ—*ibid*, 2.1.1; *BSŚ*, 2.3.43.
24. saty-api bhedaḥ pagame nātha tavāhaṁ na māmakīnaḥ tvam—Śaṅkara's verse quoted by A. K. Warrier, *God in Advaita*, p. 147.
25. *BSŚ*, 2.3.43.
26. *ibid*, 3.2.18; 19; 2.3.50; 2.3.46.
27. *SLS*, 1.6.3; avidyopādhāna-kalpitāvacchedo jīvaḥ—*Bhāmāṭi* on *BSŚ*, 2.2.1: sa eva tu avidyopādhāna-bhedāt ghaṭakarakādyākāśavad bhedena prathate—*ibid*, 2.2.21.
28. nanu ko'yaṁ jīvo nāma...? brahmaiva avidyā-pratibimbītaṁ iti vadāmaḥ—*Pañca-pādikā-vivaraṇa*, p. 760.
29. *SLS*, p. 425.
30. *SLS*, 1.6.1.2. ekadhā bahudhā caiva dṛśyate jalacandravat—*Brahma-bindu Up*, 12.
31. *SLS*, 1.6.1.2.
32. *SLS*, 1.6.1.
33. *ibid*, 1.6.2.
34. *SLS*, p. 158.
35. īśvaro'pi saha sarvajñatvādi-dharmaīḥ svapnopala-bdhadevatāvaj jīvakalpita itī ācakṣate—*SLS*, p. 159; p. 159.

## CHAPTER

# 12

## THE SELF IN BHĀSKARA-VEDĀNTA

### Introduction

The philosophy of Bhāskara (9th century A. D.) is called Aupādhika-bhedābheda-vāda or the philosophy of Conditional Difference-cum-Non-difference. This philosophy accepts three reals or categories, namely, Brahman or the Absolute, *cit* or spirit and *acit* or matter. Brahman is both absolute and relative, and its relation to the spirits and matter is one of both difference and non-difference. Of these two, again non-difference is essential, while difference is created by *upādhis* i. e. adventitious or limiting adjuncts<sup>1</sup>. Like other Bhedābheda-vādins, Bhāskara refutes the Śāṅkarite theory of non-dual and characterless Brahman. Thus, according to him, Brahman is not *advaita* or pure identity; nor is it *nirguṇa* or attributeless, but is *saguṇa* or endowed with attributes. This *saguṇa* Brahman manifests itself as the selves and matter. Bhāskara's philosophy marks a transition from Śāṅkara's Monism to Rāmānuja's Qualified Monism.

### Nature of the self

According to Bhāskara, the self is a form of Brahman, since it is the *bhoktṛ-śakti*\* of Brahman that transforms itself into the

\* According to Bhāskara, Brahman has two *śaktis*: *bhoktṛ-śakti* and *bhogyā-śakti*. Of them, *bhoktṛ-śakti* changes into the *jīvas*, and *bhogyā-śakti*, into the material objects.

self. In its real nature, the self is unconditioned, actionless and infinite, and is one with Brahman. But when it is conditioned by the psycho-physical organism, it is revealed as an active agent having a limited and distinct entity<sup>2</sup>. When the self acquires perfect knowledge of Reality, it is dissociated from all the psycho-physical conditions, returns to the Absolute, and becomes identical with it<sup>3</sup>.

The self is uncaused, eternal and immutable; it is devoid of origination, change and destruction. But under the influence of *buddhi*, *ahaṁkāra*, the sense-organs, the vital airs etc., the self is subjected to the Law of Karman and to the consequent cycle of birth and death. On the basis of some *Upaniṣadic* passages which declare the selves as coming out of Brahman, like sparks from a blazing fire, some hold that the individual self originates from Brahman. But this position is untenable for Bhāskara, who asserts that these *Upaniṣadic* passages refer not to the origination of the selves, but to its relation with the limiting adjuncts by which the infinite is conditioned or finitised<sup>4</sup>. In his view, the transcendental self or the self in its unconditioned state is identical with Brahman, whereas the empirical self or the self conditioned by the *upādhi* of psycho-physical organism, is different from it. This *upādhi* is a complex of logical, moral and aesthetic limitations—known as *avidyā*, *karma* and *kāma*, respectively<sup>5</sup>—and accounts for the three states of the *jīva*, known as cognition, conation and feeling. The empirical self or *jīva* is, thus, the *jñātṛ* or knower, *kartṛ* or doer, and *bhoktṛ* or enjoyer<sup>6</sup>.

Consciousness is the essence of the self, and not its quality, as some thinkers like the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas hold. The contention of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas that in the state of liberation the self is devoid of consciousness is, for Bhāskara, untenable, since the *Śruti* says, "The self is a mass of knowledge". "The self is knowledge and bliss", and so on<sup>7</sup>. Consciousness which forms the essence of the self is, however, to be distinguished from cognition generated by sense-object-contact<sup>8</sup>. Consciousness



is sometimes regarded by Bhāskara as the *dharma* or attribute of the self, the *dharmin* or substrate<sup>9</sup>. It seems that the consciousness regarded as the attribute of the self is that produced by the sense-object contact.

The Buddhistic view that the self is merely a chain of fleeting consciousness without any permanent substratum is also not acceptable to Bhāskara, who argues that such a changing self cannot explain the facts of memory and individual identity. He further puts forward that a quality without a substratum is unimaginable, for substance and quality always exist together, where the substance is the substrate of the attributes<sup>10</sup>. Accordingly, consciousness by itself cannot be regarded as the self.

The self in its essential nature is devoid of action, but because of the *upādhis* or conditions, it is manifested as the agent of actions and also as the reaper of the fruits thereof<sup>11</sup>. Thus, according to Bhāskara, the empirical self is an active agent having freedom of will. It cannot be a passive or indifferent spectator, as the Sāṃkhyaists hold. If the self were an indifferent spectator devoid of any activity and freedom of will, the *Vedic* injunctions for the performance of sacrifice would be meaningless. Again, if the self were devoid of free will, no moral responsibility could be ascribed to it<sup>12</sup>.

The self is essentially infinite. In its empirical state, however, it is revealed as atomic in magnitude, because of the *upādhi* or condition of the psycho-physical organism<sup>13</sup>. This atomic self exists in the heart wherefrom it animates and controls the whole body, just as a drop of sandal-paste perfumes its surrounding place<sup>14</sup>. The empirical self is not all-pervasive, as the Naiyāyikas hold. If it were all-pervasive, it would be present in all the bodies and cognise all objects. But as it does not actually happen so, the self must be regarded as non-pervasive or atomic. Of course, as said above, this atomicity is not natural to be self; it is caused during the state of bondage by the influence of the *upādhis*. In the state of liberation, the self, being identical with Brahman, regains its all-pervasive nature<sup>15</sup>.

According to Bhāskara, the activities of the empirical selves are real. Of course, the relation of the self with *buddhi*, *ahamkāra* etc., which is the root of all the activities of the self, is not an eternal fact. Even then, so long as this association exists, the agency of the self is real in every sense<sup>16</sup>. The Advaitins contend that the selves, being the reflections of Brahman in *avidyā*, are false, while Brahman is the only reality under all circumstances. Against this, Bhāskara argues thus: First, if the *jīva* were a false reflection of Brahman in *avidyā*, then there would be neither any possibility nor any need for liberation<sup>17</sup>. Secondly, if there were only one self without a second, then one would be able to experience all that are experienced by others, which, however, is not the fact. Thus, in the view of Bhāskara, the Advaitic theory cannot explain the fact of the difference of experiences of different individuals. On the other hand, the theory of *upādhi*, which recognises the self-identity of the empirical selves and also the reality of their mutual distinctions, can explain, Bhāskara claims, the difference of individual experiences<sup>18</sup>.

### The Self and Brahman

According to Bhāskara, the individual self is a part or *aṃśa* of Brahman, since it is nothing but the unlimited Brahman limited by *upādhis* or conditions. Just as sparks are parts of fire, or the *ākāśa* confined by a jar or by a house is a part of the unlimited *ākāśa*, and the five *prāṇas* or vital airs are parts of the vast air, so the individual self is a part of Brahman.

Bhāskara rejects both the views of abstract Monism of Śaṅkara and Qualified Monism of Rāmānuja and propounds the theory of *Bhedābheda* or Difference-cum-Non-difference. It is by this theory that Bhāskara reconciles the passages like 'That thou art' etc. which declare identity, with the passages like 'The two unborn ones' etc. which declare difference<sup>19</sup>. According to him, both these sets of passages are equally valid



in their primary sense, since the transcendental self is identical with Brahman, the Infinite, while the empirical self, being conditioned by the *upādhi* of *avidyā* or ignorance, forgets this identity. The empirical self cultivates a sense of false identity with the psycho-physical organism, and owns all the moral and metaphysical imperfections accruing from this sense of false identity. Thus, in the effect-state or empirical state, the *jīva*, being limited by the *upādhi*, becomes distinct from Brahman. Even at the time of *pralaya*, it remains in a subtle form in the being of Brahman. Bhāskara further holds that between the *jīva* and Brahman, the *jīva* is the seeker, while Brahman is the sought. And as the seeker and the sought are necessarily different, the *jīva* and Brahman must be regarded as different<sup>20</sup>. But yet the *jīva* is not completely different from Brahman, since the former is nothing but a part or a conditioned state of the latter. That is to say, in its real nature, the self is identical with Brahman. Thus, the self and Brahman are both identical and different. Further, in the view of Bhāskara, the infinite and transcendental Brahman descends into the hearts of the beings as their inner self or *antaryāmin* and controls them in all their activities<sup>21</sup>. He holds that it is this idea of *antaryāmin* that can most adequately explain the concept of *bhedābheda* or difference-cum-identity.

There are passages in the scriptures which declare identity between Brahman and the *jīva*. There are also passages which establish difference between the two. Bhāskara holds that the passages which declare identity refer to the unconditioned Brahman, while the passages that speak of duality refer to Brahman conditioned by *upādhis*<sup>22</sup>. The manifold world of selves and matter is a transformation of Brahman conditioned by *upādhis*. When one acquires the true knowledge of Reality, the *upādhis* which lie at the root of the limited appearance of Brahman as the individual self are destroyed. The self then shakes off its idea of difference and becomes one with Brahman. At this state, all distinctions being resolved, the *jīva* is absorbed

in the Absolute, just as the *ākāśa* confined by a jar becomes one with the unlimited *ākāśa* after the destruction of the jar<sup>23</sup>. In support of the position that Brahman and the *jīva* are essentially non-different in the state of release, Bhāskara refers to the *Śruti* which describes that the self merges into Brahman just as the river-water merges into the sea-water<sup>24</sup>.

Bhāskara holds that the difference between Brahman and the self is conditional i. e. real so long as the conditions exist, while their non-difference is natural. And since in liberation the conditions are destroyed by real knowledge, the self becomes identical with Brahman. In this respect, the views of Śaṅkara and Bhāskara seem to be identical. But in some places, Bhāskara seems to hold that, as in bondage so in liberation also the self remains a part of Brahman.<sup>25</sup> To reconcile both these positions, we must hold that, according to Bhāskara, Brahman and the released self are not completely identical. In the words of Srinivasacari, "Bhāskara is not in favour of identity or inseparability but is inclined to interpret *mukti* as self-expension and *ekābhāva* or oneness with the Absolute, *Ekābhāva* is not absolute identity between *jīva* and *Īśvara* as in Advaita, as it refers only to unitive consciousness"<sup>26</sup>.

The liberated self and Brahman are, therefore, neither two nor one. But yet Bhāskara describes this relation between the two as 'identity' in his own sense. Thus, though according to both Śaṅkara and Bhāskara, the self and Brahman become identical in the state of liberation, there is a difference between the views of these two thinkers. According to Bhāskara, the self is a part of Brahman, and the identity in liberation is like the identity between the river-water, and the sea-water, or between the *ākāśa* conditioned by a jar and the *ākāśa* unconditioned<sup>27</sup>. According to Śaṅkara, on the other hand, the *jīva* is not a part of Brahman, but is Brahman itself under all circumstances. In the state of bondage, he says, the *jīva* forgets this natural identity with Brahman, while in liberation, it again remembers it. According to Bhāskara, the difference at the effect-

state is real, and not illusory, but yet the *jīva* is not distinct from Brahman, since it is Brahman that takes the form of the *jīva*. According to Śaṅkara, on the other hand, the *jīva*, being identical with Brahman under all circumstances, the sense of difference in the empirical state is illusory.

Both Rāmānuja and Bhāskara agree that the *jīva* is a part of Brahman, but they differ in certain points. Thus, according to Rāmānuja, in both the effect-state and the causal state, the *jīva* is related to Brahman as its part. Accordingly, for him, there is a difference between the two both in bondage and in liberation. Rāmānuja holds that in liberation, the *jīva* exists as the servant of Brahman, the Lord. According to Bhāskara, on the other hand, the *jīva* is different from Brahman only in the effect-state, while in liberation, it becomes identical with Brahman, and attains the qualities like all-knowing-ness all-powerful-ness etc. pertaining to Brahman<sup>28</sup>. Identity, according to Bhāskara, is, of course, not complete one-ness, as in Śaṅkara's philosophy, but merely an integral existence.

### REFERENCES

1. Jīva-parayoś ca svābhāviko' bhedaḥ aupādhika's tu bhedaḥ—*BSB*, 4.4.4.
2. aupādhikam idaṁ kartṛtvam yāvat upādhyānuvartate—*ibid*, 3. 4. 26; na svābhāvikaṁ kartṛtvam anirmokṣa-pra-saṅgāt...upādhī-vaśāt kartṛtvam upajāyate...tad-vimuktaś ca akartā iti—*ibid*, 2. 3. 40.
3. abhinna-rūpaṁ svābhāvikaṁ aupādhikaṁ tu bhinna-rūpaṁ—*ibid*, 2. 3. 43.
4. nātmā jāyate...nityatvāt utpattiḥ virudhyate—*ibid*, 2. 3. 17. upādhyāvacchinnasya anyabhūtasya vācako'yam amśa-śabdaḥ prayuktaḥ, yathā agner visphuliṅgasya—*BSB*, 2. 3. 43.

5. tasmāt tadam'abhūtasya jīvasya avidyā-kāma-karmayogāt tu saṁsāritvam—*BSB*, 1. 2. 6.
6. kartā ātmā śāstrārtha-vat-tvāt 'yajeta' 'upāsita' iti—*ibid*, 2. 3. 33; jñātṛ-svarūpasya sarvadā aparokṣatvāt—*ibid*, 2. 3. 18.
7. visphuliṅga-nyāyena 'vijñānam ānandaṁ brahma' 'satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma' iti. svābhāvikaṁ cāsyā brahma-rūpaṁ aupādhikam itarat—*ibid*, 2. 3. 18.
8. tasmād ālokendriyādibhyo jñānam utpadyamānaṁ nirudhyamānaṁ cānyad ātma-caitanyaṁ cānyat—*BSB*, quoted by Swami Prajñanānanda in *Vedānta-darśaner Itihāsa*, Vol. I.
9. cf. tasya caitanyaṁ dharmah—*BSB*, 3. 2. 22.
10. na hi guṇa-rahitaṁ dravyam asti na dravya-rahito guṇah—*ibid*, 3. 2. 2. 3.
11. na svābhāvikaṁ kartṛtvam anirmokṣa-prasaṅgāt. kartṛtve tannimittaṁ karma tataḥ sukha-duḥkha-bhogaḥ syāt...*ibid*, 2. 3. 40.
12. kartā ātmā śāstrārtha-vat-tvāt 'yajeta' 'upāsita' iti...*ibid*, 2. 3. 33.
13. saṁsāra-vasthāyām aṇuḥ ātmā iti na tu tadeva asya nijaṁ rūpaṁ tat-tvam-asi iti brahmātmavopadeśāt—*ibid*, 2. 3. 29.
14. yathā haricandana-binduḥ śarīraikadeśe nipatitaḥ kṛtsnaṁ śarīram ahlādayati tatheti—*ibid*, 2. 3. 23.
15. hrdayāyatanāpekṣam aṇīyas-tvam jyāyastvam tu nijaṁ rūpaṁ—*BSB*, 2.3.29; ātmā muktaḥ sarvagataḥ—*ibid*, 4.4.15.
16. na ca aupādhikaṁ kartṛtvam apāramārthikam—*ibid*, 2. 3. 40.
17. ābhāsasya avastutvābhyupagamāt avastunaḥ śāśa-viśāṇakalpasya acetanasya kutaḥ bandhaḥ mokṣaḥ vā karmādhikāraḥ vā—*ibid*, 2. 3. 50.
18. sve sve śarīre vartamāno yadā kartā bhoktā ca tadā kutaḥ saṅkaraḥ—*ibid*, 2. 3. 49.
19. tattvam asi—*Ch Up*, 6. 8. 7; jñā-jñāu dvāv-ajau—*Śv Up*, 1. 9.
20. itaś ca na śarīraḥ manomayaḥ yasmāt tasya kartṛtvena upāsakatvena vyapadeśaḥ karmatvena upāsyatvena prāpyatvena ca brahma vyapadiśyate—*BSB*, 1. 2. 4.
21. kaścit antarāvasthitaḥ yamayitā ca antaryāmī iti vyapadiśyate...sarva-bhūta-yamayitṛtvam nāma tasya dharmah—*ibid*, 1. 2. 18.
22. sa ca bhinnābhinna-svarūpaḥ, abhinna-rūpaṁ svābhāvikaṁ aupādhikaṁ tu bhinnarūpaṁ—*ibid*, 2. 3. 43.
23. yathā ca bhagne ghaṭe ghaṭākāśo mahākāśa eva bhavati—jīva-parayoś ca svābhāvikaḥ abhedaḥ, aupādhikas tu bhedaḥ sa tan-nivṛttau nivartate—*ibid*, 4. 4. 4.
24. śrutiḥ api nadi-dṛṣṭāntena imam arthaṁ jñāpayati 'yathā nadyaḥ syandamānāḥ samudre'...*ibid*, 1. 4. 20.

25. cf. paramātmānam pratipadya tena ekībhūtaḥ tasmin brahmaṇi mod-  
ante. na niraṁkuṣaṁ muktānāmaśvaryaṁ...parameśvarā-dhīnam eva  
eṣāṁ aiśvar yaṁ—*BSB*, 4. 4. 21 ; see *ibid*, 4. 4. 22. and B. K. Banerji,  
*Bhāratīya-darśane Mukti-vād*, pp. 49-50.
26. P. N. Srinivasachari, *The Philosophy of Bhedābheda*, p. 128.
27. tat-tvam-aśi ahaṁ brahmāsmi payodake śuddhe śuddham āsitum  
tādṛsaḥ bhavati...yathā ca bhagne ghaṭe ghaṭākāśaḥ mahākāśaḥ eva  
bhavati—*BSB*, 4. 4. 4.
28. muktaḥ kāraṇātmanāṁ prāpya tadvad eva sarvajñaḥ srva-śaktiḥ—  
*ibid*, 4.4.7 ; see *ibid*, 1.1.4, 4.4.7.8.

## CHAPTER

## 13

## THE SELF IN RĀMĀNUJA-VEDĀNTA

## Introduction

The philosophy of Rāmānuja ( 1017 A.D.—1137 A.D. ) is known as Viśiṣṭādvaita or Qualified Monism, because it accepts Brahman as the only fundamental reality which within its own being consists of *viśeṣya* and *viśeṣana* i. e. substance and attribute. According to Rāmānuja, categories are of three kinds, namely, Brahman or Īśvara, *cit* or the self, and *acit* or matter. Brahman is the ultimate principle of the universe. Though non-dual, Brahman admits of internal difference, because the whole universe of matter and the selves moves within its being. The *cit* elements or the selves and the *acit* elements or matter are related to Brahman as bodies or *śarīras*, or as modes or attributes, technically called *prakāras* or *śeṣas* or *viśeṣaṇas*. These elements have got distinct characteristics of their own, and, as such, are different from the essential nature of Brahman, yet they are non-different from Brahman, since they have no separate existence apart from it<sup>1</sup>.

## Nature of the Self

The self is a spiritual principle informing the body and controlling it from within. It is quite distinct from the sense-organs, the body, the vital airs and the mind. Like Brahman, the self is *ajāda* or immaterial and *cetana* or conscious. It is of the nature of consciousness, and also the substratum of

consciousness. Consciousness is both the substance or essence and the attribute or property of the self, like the light of a lamp. The self is thus both knowledge and the substrate of knowledge. As knowledge constitutes its essential attribute, the self is the knower or *jñātā* and as knowledge constitutes its essence, the self is *jñāna* or knowledge<sup>2</sup>. The knowledge which is regarded as an eternal attribute of the self is called *dharma-bhūta-jñāna*. Rāmānuja maintains a distinction between *caitanya* and *cetana*: *caitanya* means knowledge, while *cetana* means one endowed with knowledge. For him, these two concepts of 'knower' and 'knowledge' are logically distinguishable, but actually inseparable.

The self, being of the nature of consciousness, is *sva-prakāśa* or *svayam-jyoti* i. e. self-revealed: it reveals itself without the help of any other principle<sup>3</sup>. Though knowledge is unlimited, it is capable of being contracted and expanded. It contracts under the influence of *karman*, and regains its unlimited state when it is no longer influenced by *karman*. Though essentially conscious and self-revealed, the self cannot realise its nature during bondage, because *śuddha-sattva*, the substratum of true knowledge, is enveloped at this state by the power of *avidyā*. In consequence, the *jīva* behaves like an unconscious material object. When *śuddha-sattva* is manifested by spiritual practices, the self realises its essentially conscious and self-revealing nature<sup>4</sup>.

According to Rāmānuja, the self is of the nature of bliss also. He says that peace and bliss experienced during dreamless sleep, must be regarded as originating from the essence of the self itself, because no other source is there at that time<sup>5</sup>.

The self is an eternal substance devoid of birth and death. The essence of the self never changes; changes that seem to pertain to the self are nothing but the contraction and expansion of its consciousness. The self is the *draṣṭṛ* or seer, *karṭṛ* or doer and *bhokṭṛ* or enjoyer. *Karṭṛtva* or the power of agency and *bhokṭṛtva* or the power of enjoyment are, however, not natural to the real self; they are generated in it only in its

empirical state. When the self is associated with a psycho-physical organism, it performs actions relating to the worldly life, and enjoys pleasures and pains accruing from them. In its real, eternal and transcendental nature, however, the self is neither an agent nor an enjoyer<sup>6</sup>. The self is described as *śeṣa* or accessory, *ādheya* or supported and *paratantra* or dependent. For it is a mode of Brahman, is supported by Brahman, and is dependent on Brahman. The self is called *avyakta* also, since it cannot be apprehended by the sense-organs. It is further described as *acintya* or unthinkable, as it cannot be circumscribed by the discursive mind, though it can be grasped by the mind purified by *śravaṇa manana* and *nididhyāsana*<sup>7</sup>.

The self is atomic in magnitude. If it were not so, it could not get out of the body in death and enter into the womb of another being for the next birth. Though atomic, the self can pervade the whole body through its *dharma-bhūta-jñāna* or attributive knowledge, just as a drop of sandal-wood-paste perfumes the whole body. That is why the self can experience the pleasures and pains arising in any part of the body<sup>8</sup>.

The existence of a distinct self is felt by every person through the apprehension of 'I'. The self, therefore, cannot be regarded as false. Even in liberation, this entity denoted by the term 'I' prevails. If there be none to feel or realise in the state of release, it will be meaningless to strive for liberation. The self, being distinct in every organism, is many; it is not one, as held by the Śāṅkarites<sup>9</sup>.

### The Self and Brahman

According to Rāmānuja, the self is fully supported and controlled (*niyāmya*) by the Lord, and, as such, it has no real independence of its own. It is not possible for the self to exist, or know anything, or perform any action without the support and control of the Lord. That is why the self is



called *śeṣa* or subordinate, *niyāmya* or controlled, and *para-tantra* or dependent, whereas Brahman is called *tattva* or principle, *niyāmaka* or controller and *svatantra* or independent. The *jīva* may think or desire through its free-will, but these thoughts and desires cannot come into actuality unless they are approved by the Lord. Of course, the attainments by the individual self are conditioned by *adṛṣṭa* i. e. merits and demerits arising from the past actions of the self. But *adṛṣṭa*, being an unconscious principle, cannot work by itself; it requires to be guided by a conscious agent i. e. the Lord<sup>10</sup>. *Īśvara*, being the Lord of all, is an object of worship, while the self is the worshipper. In liberation, the self attains *sāyujya* or eternal communion with *Īśvara*, and remains in his eternal service<sup>11</sup>.

In the view of Rāmānuja, Brahman and the self cannot be identical, as the Śāṅkarites hold, because they differ in their essential characteristics. The self is finite, atomic and imperfect, while Brahman is infinite, all-pervasive and perfect. In the *Upaniṣads*, the self and Brahman are said to be identical, only in the sense that *Īśvara* pervades the selves and controls them from within. Rāmānuja says that identity cannot exist between two altogether different things, nor between two exactly identical things; it can exist only between two forms of the same entity. The statement 'This is that Devadatta' speaks of identity between two states—earlier and later—of the same person. In the same way, in the statement 'That thou art', 'that' denotes *Īśvara* in the form of the omniscient and omnipotent creator of the world, while 'thou' denotes *Īśvara* in the form of the embodied self. The identity spoken of here is, therefore, between *Īśvara* endowed with certain qualifications and *Īśvara* endowed with some other qualifications i. e. between two states of the same reality of Brahman. In other words, this identity is one of two qualified states of the same entity—*viśiṣṭasya aikyam*<sup>12</sup>. Though co-eternal with Brahman, the selves have no separate existence; they are related to Brahman

in both the causal state and the effect-state, as its inner body, the world forming the outer body.

The self is regarded by Rāmānuja as a part of Brahman. This does not, however, mean that the self is separated from the being of Brahman, since Brahman does not admit of any division. The self is regarded as a part of Brahman, only in the sense that the former is a *viśeṣaṇa* i. e. quality or mode of the latter. Just as light and colour are regarded as parts of fire and jar, respectively, in which they inhere as attributes, so the self is regarded as a part of Brahman to which it is related as a quality or mode. Again, just as a substance and its attributes are different in their essential nature, though they are inseparably related as whole-and-part, so Brahman and the *jīva* are different in their essential nature, though they are inseparable or non-different from each other<sup>13</sup>. Also, the selves are regarded by Rāmānuja as the effects of Brahman, not in the sense that they are produced like *ākāśa*, *vayu* etc., but in the sense that they cannot exist apart from it.

The relation between Brahman and the self, as accepted by Rāmānuja, is not one of identity, nor of difference, nor of identity-in-difference. According to him, the self and Brahman are different in essence, because the self is finite and imperfect, while Brahman is infinite and perfect. On the other hand, the self being inseparable from Brahman, the substratum or *ātman*, there is *abheda* or *tādātmya* i. e. identity between the two. Rāmānuja reconciles both these concepts of difference and identity by regarding the self as a part or qualification of Brahman. That means, there being both difference and identity between the whole, and its part, the relation between Brahman, the whole, and the self, the part, is also one of difference and identity<sup>14</sup>. But yet the philosophy of Rāmānuja is called *Viśiṣṭādvaita*, since the selves and matter are consumed within the being of Brahman.

Just as an attribute has no existence apart from the substance, so the self has no existence apart from Brahman. At the time



of dissolution, the self merges into Brahman in its subtle and unmanifest form. This state is called *kāraṇāvasthā* or the causal state. At the time of creation, it becomes manifest. This state is called *kāryāvasthā* or the effect-state. In both these states, the self and Brahman are inseparable from each other, the former forming the body or qualification of the latter<sup>15</sup>.

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4. saṁsāra-daśāyām svarūpa-jñānayoḥ saṁkocāt ap i-parimāṇam ātma-svarūpam, mokṣa-daśāyām tu sarva-gataṁ sarva-vyāpi jñānam ca vistṛṇatayā prakāśate—*Nyāya-siddhāntajana*, p. 214.
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6. saṁsārika-pravṛttiṣu kartṛivaṁ na svarūpa-prayuktam api tu guṇa-saṁsarga-kṛtam—*Tattva-traya*, 19.
7. Vedārtha-saṁgraha, p. 18 ; see A. Sengupta, *A Critical Study of the Philosophy of Rāmānuja*, p. 140.
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10. sarvātmanā adhāratayā niyantṛtayā śeṣatayā ca āpnoti...ādheyatayā niyamyatayā śeṣatayā ca aprthak-siddham—*Vedārtha-saṁgraha*, p. 18 ; see *Vedānta-dīpa*, Avataraṇikā and—*BSR*, 2. 3. 41.
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## CHAPTER

# 14

## THE SELF IN NIMBĀRKA VEDĀNTA

### Introduction

The philosophy of Nimbārka ( 11th-12th century A. D. ) is called Svābhāvika-bhedābheda-vāda or the Theory of Natural Difference-cum-Non-difference, because according to this system, Brahman is both identical with and different from the selves and matter for all time. In the view of Nimbārka, realities are of two kinds, namely, *svatantra* or independent and *paratantra* or dependent. The Universal Self—differently known as Paramātman, Para-Brahman, Bhagavat or Īśvara—is the only independent reality. Dependent realities are of two kinds, namely, *cetana* or conscious and *acetana* or non-conscious. *Jīvas* or the individual selves are the conscious dependent realities, while *prakṛti*, its effects and *Kāla* or time are the non-conscious dependent realities<sup>1</sup>.

### Nature of the Self

The self, according to Nimbārka, is of the nature of consciousness. Consciousness is nature to the self; it is not produced by the contact between the sense-organs and the objects, as held by the Naiyāyikas. The self is not only consciousness, but also the substratum of consciousness i. e. both *jñāna-svarūpa* and *jñānāśraya*<sup>2</sup>. The consciousness of the self is essentially all-pervasive, but during the state of bondage, it is limited by the influence of *avidyā*. Being of the nature of consciousness,

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the self is self-luminous. In its very nature, the self is pure and free from all sins. It is eternal i. e. devoid of origination, destruction etc.

In the empirical state, however, the self, being under the spell of *avidyā*, does not realise its real nature. By *avidyā*, Nimbārka means the past deeds or Karmans of the self, and not false knowledge or illusion, as the Śāṅkarites hold. This *avidyā* is regarded by Nimbārka as without any beginning. Accordingly, the self influenced by *avidyā* is subjected to bondage from beginning-less time<sup>3</sup>. The self under bondage identifies itself with the empirical ego, and is confined to the empirical world. As a results, it undergoes birth and death, and experiences pleasures and pains. The *jīva* or empirical self is a doer or agent; it performs actions, and gets the fruits thereof. If the self were not an active agent, the scriptural texts ordaining actions for the attainment of relevant fruits—either in this life or in the life hereafter—would be meaningless. The experiences of pleasures and pains by the *jīva* and the facts of bondage and liberation become meaningful, only when the *jīva* is regarded as an active agent. If the *jīva* were not an active agent, why should it be subjected to pleasures and pains? Again, who would undergo practical discipline for the attainment of liberation, if the *jīva* were inactive<sup>4</sup>? In reality, agency or doer-ship exists in the Supreme Lord alone who transmits His doer-ship to the individual selves, so that they can act according to their choice and needs in their empirical life.

The *jīva*, however, is not independent; its existence, knowledge, actions etc. are all dependent upon Paramātman who alone is independent. The very nature of the self banks upon the Lord: the self exists, knows and acts through the existence, knowledge and action of the Lord<sup>5</sup>.

The *jīva* has got no independent existence, because it is an *aṁśa* of Brahman. According to Nimbārka, however, *aṁśa* does not mean 'part', it means potency or *śakti*. Accordingly, the *jīva* is regarded as a *śakti* or potency of the Lord. And,

as potency is dependent on its substratum or locus, the *jīva* must be regarded as dependent on Brahman, the substratum<sup>6</sup>.

The *jīva* is atomic in magnitude. It is because of its atomic magnitude that the *jīva* can get out of a body at the time of death and enter into the womb of another for the next birth<sup>7</sup>. The self cannot be all-pervasive, because an all-pervasive entity cannot move. Further, if it were all-pervasive, it would come in contact with all the bodies, and, consequently, would experience pleasures and pains through all the bodies. Neither can the self be of intermediate magnitude, because, if it were so, it would be subject to origination and destruction<sup>8</sup>. The self, therefore, can neither be all-pervasive nor be intermediary in magnitude. It is atomic in size, and occupies a point in the body. But, though atomic, the self enlightens and pervades the whole body by its quality of knowledge, just as a lamp occupying a small space in a room illuminates the whole room, or just as a drop of sandal-wood-paste, applied to a part of the body cools the entire body<sup>9</sup>. Thus, pervading the whole body by its quality of knowledge, the self experiences the pleasures and pains of the entire organism. The self is sometimes described in the scriptures as all-pervasive, but, according to Nimbārka, this all-pervasive-ness refers not to the magnitude of the self but to the expanse of the quality of knowledge<sup>10</sup>. In the empirical state, the power and knowledge of the self become limited, because, at that time, the nature of the self is enveloped by nescience or *avidyā* i. e. the fruits of past actions. Being thus enveloped by *avidyā*, the self is subjected to bondage. When it realises Īśvara, it regains its natural knowledge and power, and attains liberation.

According to Nimbārka, the selves are many or infinite in number. Though all the selves are equally *aṁśas* or potencies of the Lord, they are distinct from one another. In the empirical state, their distinction is clearly known, since, at that time, they are endowed with distinct organisms and senses. Nimbārka holds that during liberation also, the selves are

distinct from one another, though all of them are inseparably related to Brahman<sup>11</sup>.

### The Self and Brahman

The self is regarded by Nimbārka as a *śakti* i. e. potency or attribute of Brahman, the *śaktimat* i. e. the substrate of power or attribute. According to Nimbārka, an attribute or power can be regarded as a part or *aṁśa* of the substance or the powerful. Accordingly, the self, which is a potency or attribute, is, at the same time, an *aṁśa* or part of Brahman, the *aṁśin* or the whole<sup>12</sup>. The *Śruti* therefore, declares that the *jīva* or the self is an *aṁśa* of Brahman. The Lord Kṛṣṇa also declares in the *Gītā*: 'In the world of beings, the *jīva* or the self is my *aṁśa* or part'<sup>13</sup>. And as Nimbārka takes the term '*aṁśa*' in the sense of 'power' or 'attribute', the scriptural passages referred to above mean, according to him, that the self is an attribute or potency of Brahman, and not that the self is really a part of Brahman, like a spark of fire.

The *jīva* is not a limitation of Brahman due to *avidyā* or *antahkaraṇa* (internal organ), as some Advaitins (Avacchedavādins) hold, because Brahman, being all-pervasive cannot be limited by any condition<sup>14</sup>. Neither can it be a reflection of Brahman in individual *avidyā*, as another class of the Advaitins (Pratibimbavādins) hold, because both *avidyā* and Brahman being partless and formless, no reflection is possible between them<sup>15</sup>.

Now, as the relation between a substance and its attributes or between the powerful and its powers or between the whole and its parts is both identity and difference, the self must be regarded as both identical with and different from Brahman; the relation between them is neither only identity nor only difference<sup>16</sup>. Nimbārka says that this position can be supported by the *Śruti* as well as by reasoning. In the *Śruti*, there are passages

that declare identity between Brahman and the self. There are also passages that declare difference between the two. And, as all these texts have equal strength, Nimbārka argues, both these sets of texts should be regarded as valid. Accordingly, Brahman and the self are both identical and different<sup>17</sup>. By 'identity' Nimbārka means not absolute one-ness but non-cognition of difference. Mādhava Mukunda says that the *jīva* and Brahman are identical in the sense that the *jīva* is of the nature of Brahman, that its existence and action are grounded on Brahman, and that it is pervaded by Brahman<sup>18</sup>. The *Śruti*-texts like 'Thou art that', 'This ātman is Brahman', 'I am Brahman', 'All this is Brahman'<sup>19</sup> etc. declare identity between Brahman and the self. Nimbārka further argues that the self is the effect of Brahman which is both the material cause and the efficient cause of it. And as the material cause and the effect are non-different, Brahman and the self are non-different<sup>20</sup>. On the other hand, passages like '*jñājñau*' etc., which declare the eternality of both Brahman and the self, indicate their difference. The renowned simile of two birds occurring in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* says: "Of the two birds living on the same tree, one eats the fruits, while the other merely looks on". This *Śruti* also, according to Nimbārka, supports the same view that Brahman and the self are different from each other. The Lord Kṛṣṇa also clearly indicates their difference in the *Gītā*, when he says, "The Lord dwells in the heart of all beings", "All this is threaded in me as pearls in a string" and so on<sup>21</sup>.

The difference between Brahman and the self can be established by reasoning also. First, if they are regarded as absolutely identical, we shall be forced to hold that Brahman by imposing self-hood on itself subjects itself to the sorrows and sufferings of the empirical life. Secondly, if Brahman were identical with the self, then, like the self, Brahman also would be the doer of good and bad actions and the experiencer of the fruits—painful or enjoyable—of those actions<sup>22</sup>. But this

position is not tenable, since it goes against the very nature of Brahman. Absolute identity between Brahman and the self cannot, therefore, be supported. The self is only a part or power, while Brahman is the whole or the powerful. Though both the self and Brahman are of the nature of consciousness, the former is not omniscient like the latter<sup>23</sup>. Again, the self is not all-pervasive nor all-powerful, while Brahman is. Thus, there is difference between Brahman and the self. And, as the self remains a potency of Brahman under all circumstances, it maintains its *jīvatva* or self-ness and remains different from Brahman even in liberation.

But though the released self retains its integrity and independence, it looks upon itself as non-different from Brahman. Though the liberated self and Brahman are not completely identical, they are similar in nature and quality, since both of them are pure, stainless and omniscient. In this state, the self attains a luminous divine body and exists in eternal association with Śrīkṛṣṇa, the Lord<sup>24</sup>. Nimbārka's conception of the self is to be distinguished from that of Bhāskara, according to which the self is different from Brahman during the empirical life, but is completely identical with it during liberation. Thus, on the ground of scriptural authority and reasoning, Nimbārka establishes the relation of identity-cum-difference between Brahman and the self. The idea of this relation of identity-cum-difference has been clarified by Nimbārka with the help of the examples of similar relation existing between the sea and its waves, between the sun and its rays, between the earth and its effects like adamant, emerald etc., and so on. In other words, just as the waves, the rays, and things like emerald etc. are both different and non-different from the sea, the sun, and the earth, respectively, so the selves are both different and non-different from Brahman<sup>25</sup>.

In the view of the Nimbārkaists, *Vedic* passages, like 'That thou art' etc. mean that the relation between Brahman and the self is one of *tādātmya* or non-difference, Brahman

being the *ādhāra* or locus and the *jīva* being the *ādheya* or contained. In liberation also, the self and Brahman do not become completely identical, though they remain non-different from each other. The liberated self and Brahman are non-different, since both of them are of the nature of knowledge, and are endowed with the quality of infinite knowledge. But yet they are different, in the sense that Brahman is endowed with cosmic activities, while the self is not<sup>26</sup>.

According to Nimbārka, this relation of identity-cum-difference is *svābhāvika* or natural, and not *aupādhika* or conditional, as held by Bhāskara. In other words, this relation of identity-cum-difference is true for all time ; it exists even in dissolution and release. Accordingly, Nimbārka holds that during liberation, the self is not wholly identical with Brahman, but is both identical with and different from it. That is why the system of Nimbārka is called *Svābhāvika-bhedābheda-vāda*<sup>27</sup>.

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25. avibhāge api samudra-taraṅgayoḥ iva, sūrya-tat-prabhayoḥ iva tayorvibhāgaḥ syāt—*BSN*, 2. 1. 13 ; see *VK* on *ibid*.
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## CHAPTER

# 15

## THE SELF IN MADHVA-VEDĀNTA

### Introduction

According to Madhva (1238-1317 A.D.), Brahman—otherwise called Paramātman or Īśvara is the ultimate reality. The philosophy of Madhva is called Svatantrāsīsvatantra-vāda, since it accepts two kinds of realities : *svatantra* or independent and *asvatantra* or non-independent<sup>1</sup>. Īśvara or Brahman identified with Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the only independent reality, while the selves, *prakṛti* and the material objects are realities dependent on Brahman. The traditional name Dvaita-vāda or Dualism is also applied to this system, because according to this system, the selves and the material world are quite distinct from Īśvara or Brahman : they are neither identical with it; nor are they related to it as parts or attributes.

### Nature of the Self

The selves, according to Madhva, are finite centres of consciousness. They are many, because every individual is endowed with a distinct self. Though all the selves possess certain common characteristics, each of them has distinct units of existence, consciousness and bliss. The self is a dynamic principle having the qualities of will, cognition and bliss : it is essentially active, conscious and blissful. It is endowed with pure consciousness and unmixed bliss, and is essentially free from ignorance and misery. Sometimes bliss and knowledge are regarded as forming the essence of the self. The self is a

performer of actions and enjoyer of the fruits thereof<sup>2</sup>. The action, knowledge and bliss of the individual self are, however, of limited nature and are different from the cosmic activity, infinite knowledge and infinite bliss of Brahman<sup>3</sup>. The faculties of pure consciousness and unmixed bliss of the self are concealed by *avidyā* in the state of bondage, but are revealed by the grace of the Lord during liberation. The self is eternal i. e. devoid of origination and destruction. If the self be subject to destruction, Madhva argues, the doer may not exist till the ripening of the fruits of its own deeds, and, in that case the Law of Karman and all the concepts of moral values will have to be abandoned. Not only that, even the pursuit for liberation will be meaningless, if the self does not exist eternally to enjoy that state<sup>4</sup>.

The self is of the nature of self-luminosity, since consciousness, the essential attribute of the self, is *svaprakāśa* or self-luminous<sup>5</sup>. And, as all luminous entities like fire, the sun etc. are endowed with some form, the self also must be regarded as having some form or body. Moreover, the permanent presence of bliss and other essential properties of the self could not be imagined of, according to the author of *Yukti-mālikā*, if the self were without any form or body<sup>6</sup>.

The individual self is atomic in magnitude, and not all-pervasive or intermediary. But, though atomic, it pervades the whole body through its quality of consciousness, just as the light of a candle pervades the whole room, though the candle occupies a small space of that room. This atomicity of the self is quite in harmony, the Mādhvas claim, with the concept of the transmigration of the self. For, they say, the act of leaving a body and entering into another is possible for the self because of its atomicity. Even in liberation, the self remains atomic<sup>7</sup>. The self is not merely of the nature of knowledge, it is the knower as well. Again, it is the knower not only of other objects or the not-self but also of itself. In other words, the self is both the *jñātṛ* or the agent of knowledge, and the *jñeya* or the object

of its own knowledge. The concept of the Advaitins that the self transcends subject-object-relation is rejected by Madhva on the ground that any knowledge necessarily implies a subject and an object<sup>8</sup>.

Madhva holds that the self must be knowable i. e. it must be an object of knowledge, otherwise pursuit of the knowledge of the self will be without any meaning. The scriptural passages like 'know the self' etc. giving injunctions for the acquisition of the knowledge of the self are referred to by him in support of the knowability of the self. The view that 'the subject of knowledge cannot be the object thereof' is, according to Madhva, against the teachings of the scriptures. Experience also shows that, it is added, the self can be the object of its own consciousness<sup>9</sup>. Madhva distinguishes between consciousness and the self, and regards the latter as both the subject and the object of the former. He explains this position with the help of a peculiar category called *viśeṣa* which is said to maintain identity-in-difference between the substance and its essential attributes, and the like<sup>10</sup>.

Selves are many and are distinct from one another, as is proved by the fact that every person has got his unique experience. This distinction among the selves is, according to Madhva, rooted in the *svabhāva* or the very essence or nature of the selves. The Naiyāyikas, the Sāṃkhyaists and the Rāmānujists accept the difference of the selves on the basis of the difference of birth, death, organs etc. To Madhva, these arguments are without any value, since they establish difference not of the transcendental selves but of the empirical egos. This difference of the empirical egos is, however, not challenged by any philosopher. Madhva argues that if we take these facts of empirical difference into account and go deeper into the problem, we shall find that these differences are rooted in the very essence of the selves. The Law of Karman, which is resorted to by other thinkers for the final explanation of the differences of the empirical selves, will be without any meaning,

Madhva asserts, if differences in the very nature of the selves be not accepted. He argues that *karman* implies freedom of will or choice to do anything right or wrong, good or bad, but the problem remains as to why a particular person should pursue a particular course of action in preference to other ones. The acceptance of a beginningless chain of *karman* cannot solve this problem. All the selves being equally eternal, their *karmans* being equally beginningless, and all other conditions being similar, there is no reason why they should take different courses of action, if they be not intrinsically distinct from one another. That is to say, all the external conditions remaining the same, the differences in the behaviours of the individuals must be explained with references to some distinction in the very nature of each self<sup>11</sup>. The contention that one Universal Self appears as many is unacceptable, for if it were so, liberation of one would entail the liberation of all. The very fact of the simultaneous existence of both the bound and the liberated selves proves beyond doubt the distinction and plurality of the selves<sup>12</sup>. Madhva accepts not only essential distinction but also intrinsic gradation i.e. *tāratamya* or *svabhāva-tāratamya* among the selves on the basis of varying degrees of knowledge, power and bliss in different individuals. In his view, even the liberated selves are of different gradations<sup>13</sup>.

### The Selves and Brahman

The selves, being beginningless and eternal, are distinct from and co-existent with Brahman or Īśvara. But the omnipotence of Brahman is not limited by the eternal co-existence of the selves, because this co-existence is, for Madhva, a revelation of the will and pleasure of Brahman. Madhva asserts that the selves are metaphysically dependent on Brahman for their very being and becoming. Brahman sustains the selves in

all their five states of existence, namely, *jāgrat* or waking, *svapna* or dream, *suṣupti* or dreamless sleep, *mūrchā* or swoon, and *marāṇa* or death<sup>14</sup>. In all their actions and attainments, the selves are to bank upon the grace of the Lord. Even in the states of dissolution and release, the selves are dependent on Brahman. Further, *Īśvara* is the ultimate cause of the ignorance and bondage of the selves. Madhva, claims that this view is propounded by Bādarāyaṇa himself in the aphorism '*parā-bhidhyānāt tu tirohitam tato hyasya bandha-viparyayau*', and is supported by the *Kūrma Purāṇa*<sup>15</sup>, the *Śkanda Purāṇa* etc. The *Skanda Purāṇa* says that bondage and liberation of the self are caused by the will of the Lord<sup>16</sup>.

Ignorance, which causes the fall of man and subjects him to earthly bondage, is caused by the Lord's inscrutable power called *māyā* which has the capability to veil the natural and inherent knowledge of the self. Jayatīrtha says that *avidyā* or *māyā* is a real entity and not *anirvacanīya* or indefinable, as the Śāṅkarites hold<sup>17</sup>. Like a sheath, this *avidyā* or *māyā* envelops the innate nature of the self and binds it in the cycle of birth and death. And *Īśvara* or Brahman, being the ground of this *māyā* or ignorance, is to be regarded as the ultimate cause of the bondage of the selves.

*Īśvara* is not only the cause of ignorance and bondage of the selves, but also the cause of their knowledge and release. It is by his grace that the selves acquire true knowledge and get rid of the grip of ignorance. When *Īśvara* satisfied by the devotion and meditation of a devotee showers grace upon him, he acquires true knowledge of reality—Brahman, the self and the world—and attains liberation. Thus, for the attainment of liberation, the self finally banks upon the grace of Brahman. In the state of liberation also, the self is dependent upon *Īśvara*, because the full manifestation of the innate knowledge and bliss of the self is brought about by his grace. Even the self-luminosity of the self is effected by the grace of the Lord<sup>18</sup>. Thus, though the selves are quite distinct from Brahman, they

are dependent on it in every respect and in all the stages of their existence—both in bondage and in liberation. This dependence of the self upon Brahman is not caused by any *upādhi* or condition, but is *svābhāvika* or natural to the very being of the self. Accordingly, it is not a passing phase but is true for all time. It is to be noted that the extrinsic limitations to which the self is subjected during bondage can be terminated by the real knowledge of the self and Brahman, while the limitations which are intrinsic to the very nature of the self exist for ever. The self, being naturally endowed with limited knowledge and bliss, is eternally dependent on *Īśvara* who is endowed with infinite knowledge and bliss<sup>19</sup>.

In the view of the advaitins, scriptural passages like '*rūpaṁ rūpaṁ pratirūpa*' etc. declare that the selves are but reflections of Brahman in *avidyā*. But Madhva holds that the significance of these passages lies in the absolute dependence of the self on Brahman. In a like manner, those passages also which are regarded by Nimbārka and others as indicating the relation of part-and-whole between the self and Brahman, have their significance, according to Madhva, in this absolute dependence of the self on Brahman<sup>20</sup>. That means, just as a reflection depends on its prototype and a part, on the whole, so the selves also absolutely depend upon Brahman. During the state of bondage, the real nature of the self is partially obscured or enveloped by the veil of *avidyā* or ignorance which is, for Madhva, a positive power of *Īśvara*. Being thus subjected to ignorance, the self forgets its true nature and does not realise its dependence on, and resemblance with, Brahman<sup>21</sup>. When the self brushes off its ignorance and the consequent impurities by pursuing a course of spiritual discipline, it realises its real nature and also its dependence upon and similarity with Brahman. Like other Vaiṣṇava-Vedāntins, Madhva holds that the liberated self attains a divine body and exists in *Vaikuṇṭha* in the eternal service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord<sup>22</sup>.

According to Madhva, the self, being thus dependent and

limited in power, is in every respect different from the Lord who is independent and unlimited in power<sup>23</sup>. The Śāṅkarite view of identity between Brahman and the self is not acceptable to Madhva. He argues that Brahman being the worshipped and the self, the worshipper, there cannot be any identity between the two, as between a king and his servant. The selves, afflicted by the pains and sufferings of life, take resort to the Lord, who delivers them from those afflictions. Thus, Brahman being the deliverer and the self, the delivered, they cannot be identical with each other<sup>24</sup>. Madhva argues that if these two were identical, then Brahman, being self-revealed, would always be directly known to us and, consequently, the inquiry for Brahman ordained in the scriptures would be meaningless. Actually, however, Brahman is not revealed to us and, hence it is the object of our inquiry. Moreover, it is not possible for Brahman—which is all-powerful, all-knowing and all-blissful—to subject itself to birth, old age, death, pains and sufferings, by assuming the form of the self. Brahman cannot therefore be identical with the self.

Madhva asserts that the scriptural statements like 'tat-tvamsi' etc. do not indicate identity between Brahman and the self, as the Śāṅkarites hold. He argues that the term 'tat' indicates the 'parokṣa' or unknowable transcendental Brahman, whereas the term 'tvam' indicates the aparokṣa or the directly knowable empirical self, and, accordingly, this passage cannot be taken to indicate identity between Brahman and the self. In Madhva's view, Brahman and the self are said to be identical only because they are similar in nature, and because the qualities of Brahman, like knowledge bliss etc. form the essence of the self<sup>25</sup>.

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## CHAPTER

## 16

## THE SELF IN VALLABHA-VEDĀNTA

## Introduction

The philosophy of Vallabhācārya (1473-1531 A.D.) is known as Śuddhāvaita-vāda or Pure Non-dualism. According to this system, Brahman transforms itself into the selves and matter, though it remains ever-perfect and ever-pure in its real nature. The selves and matter are non-different from Brahman, because the effect is non-different from its cause. Accordingly, this system is called Non-dualism.

Actually, however, Vallabha's philosophy should not be regarded as Non-dualism. For, in the view of Vallabha, the world is a real manifestation of Brahman. The selves, too, being *aṁśas* or parts of Brahman, are real. Thus, both the selves and the material world having been accepted as real, this philosophy cannot be regarded as Non-dualism. Further, Vallabha himself holds that the selves and matter are both different and non-different from Brahman. This philosophy should, therefore, be regarded as a system of Bheda-bheda or Difference-cum-Identity. But yet this system is called Śuddhādvaita in the sense that though Brahman changes into the selves and matter, it remains eternally in its pure and immutable form. It is called Śuddhādvaita also in the sense that Brahman and the *jīvas* are *śuddha* or pure under all circumstances and that they are different, being related as the worshipped and the worshipper, respectively<sup>1</sup>.



## Nature of the Self

The self is naturally free, its bondage being a temporary phase caused by ignorance. If the self were not naturally free, it would not be possible for any person to attain liberation by any means, and even after the attainment of liberation, one might again be subjected to bondage. But, as the self is naturally free, it can attain liberation, and is not subjected to bondage after the attainment of liberation<sup>2</sup>. In the same way, the self is naturally pure; it seems to be associated with impurities only because of ignorance. If the self were not naturally pure, and if it were actually associated with impurities, then it would not be possible for any person to attain purity in liberation, and even after the attainment of liberation, there would be further chance for the self to be associated with impurities. But, as the impurities are not natural, with the destruction of ignorance, the cause, there remains no more chance for the self to be associated with them again.

The individual self is birthless, deathless and eternal. Birth and death actually pertain to the body, but through ignorance, they are superimposed on the self. The selves emerge out of Brahman, just as sparks shoot out from a blazing fire. This fact is regarded by Vallabha not as *utpatti* or origination, but as *āvir-bhāva* or emergence. The self, being thus devoid of *utpatti* or origination, is regarded as eternal. In support of the eternality of the self, Vallabha quotes such Vedic passages as, 'The self is free from old age and mortality', 'never indeed is this ( self ) born, never does it die' etc<sup>3</sup>.

The self is a part of Brahman, the whole. In its empirical state, the self is atomic in size and not *vibhu* or all-pervasive<sup>4</sup>, as the Śāṅkarites hold. Here, the question is: if the self were atomic in size, how could it experience all that happens in the whole body? Vallabha, like other Vaiṣṇava-Vedāntins, replies that, as the light of a candle placed in a corner illuminates the

whole room, or a drop of sandal-wood-paste applied to a part produces coolness in the whole body, so the self, though minute, experiences all that happens in the body, by spreading its sentiency all over the body<sup>5</sup>. In its real nature, however, the self is all-pervasive. The minuteness of the self is due to the obscuration of its real nature, specially, its bliss-aspect. When this bliss-aspect is fully manifested in the state of liberation, the self again acquires *vyāpakatva* or all-pervasiveness<sup>6</sup>. The *jīvas* or empirical selves are produced out of the element of *cit* or consciousness of Brahman by its mere will, in the beginning of the first creation<sup>7</sup>. The *jīvas* are real parts of Brahman and, hence, they share the nature of the latter. The entire nature of Brahman is, however, not manifested in the *jīva*. The elements of *sat* and *cit* are manifested in them, while the element of bliss is veiled or obscured ( *tirobhūta* ). It is because of the obscuration or suppression of the bliss-aspect of Brahman in them that the *jīvas* forget their divine nature and are deprived of the six divine attributes: *aiśvarya* or sovereignty, *vīrya* or valour, *yaśas* or fame, *śrī* or beauty, *jñāna* or knowledge and *vairāgya* or detachment<sup>8</sup>. As a result, the *jīvas* are bound to the phenomenal world, are caused to travel in the cycle of birth and death, and are subjected to the consequent pains and sufferings. In release, the self manifests the bliss-aspect by the grace of the Lord, and, consequently, owns the six divine qualities again<sup>9</sup>.

According to Vallabha, the *jīva* is a *kartṛ* or active agent and *bhoktṛ* or enjoyer of the good and bad results of its own acts. *Jīvas* are divided into three classes, namely, *śuddha* or pure, *saṁsārin* or worldly, and *mukta* or liberated. The *jīva* is *śuddha*, when the divine qualities like *aiśvarya*, *vīrya* etc. are not obscured by *avidyā* or ignorance. It is *saṁsārin*, when its divine qualities are obscured by *avidyā* or ignorance, as a result of which it identifies itself with the gross and subtle bodies. It is *mukta*, when it is freed from ignorance and realises its real nature<sup>10</sup>.

### The Self and Brahman

The *jīva* and Brahman are non-different from each other. But yet they are not completely identical, because Brahman is of the nature of infinite existence, infinite knowledge and infinite bliss, while the *jīva* is not so. In the *jīva*, the aspects of *sat* and *cit* are manifested, whereas the aspect of *ānanda* is obscured or veiled. Thus, the *jīva* is non-different from Brahman under certain limitations. Complete identity between the *jīva* and Brahman, as propounded by the Śāṅkarites, is not acceptable to Vallabha. He argues that the *Upaniṣadic* texts like 'That thou art' do not indicate complete identity between the *jīva* and Brahman; they simply mean that qualities of Brahman like knowledge etc. form the foundation of the *jīvas*<sup>11</sup>.

It may be asked: if Brahman be the material cause of the *jīvas*, how could the latter be devoid of *ānanda* which is the essence of the former? An effect cannot certainly be devoid of the essential nature of the cause. Just as the essential characteristic of gold follows into its effects like ring, bracelet etc., so the essential nature of Brahman i. e. *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*, should continue to exist in its effects or parts i. e. the *jīvas*. In reply, Vallabha says that the aspect of *ānanda* is not totally absent from the *jīvas*; it is simply obscured or veiled by ignorance. In liberation, this bliss-aspect in the *jīva* is again manifested by the grace of the Lord, in proportion to the *jīva's* progress in its spiritual journey, just as the masculine nature, which remains potentially in a child, is manifested at the advent of Youth<sup>12</sup>. Thus, there is no incongruity in holding that the *jīva* is a manifestation of Brahman. The relation between the two is called *advaita* or identity also, only in the sense that the qualities of Brahman, like knowledge etc. form the foundation of the *jīva*.

Again, the relation between the self and the Absolute is one of part-and-whole. The self is a part of Brahman and is related to it like sparks to a blazing fire. The contradictory

positions that Brahman is possessed of parts and is, at the same time, impartite can be assimilated, Vallabha asserts, on the strength of the scriptural statements which declare Brahman as the substratum of opposite qualities<sup>13</sup> e. g. '*apāṇipādo javano grahātā*'—though devoid of hands and feet, it is speedy and is the receiver.

In the view of Vallabha, Brahman is not completely identical with or equal to the *jīva* but is *adhika* or superior also to it, as is declared by the scriptures. In the *Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣad*, Brahman is said to be superior to the *jīva*. There are also scriptural passages which describe the *jīva* as of the nature of *vijñāna*, and Brahman as of the nature of bliss. Again in passages like 'He is to be seen' etc. Brahman is presented as an object of knowledge, as distinct from the subject i. e. the *jīva*<sup>14</sup>. All these indicate that Brahman and the *jīva* are different from each other. Vallabha, therefore, holds that Brahman and the *jīva* are not only identical, but are different as well. Giridhara also, in his commentary on the *Aṇubhāṣya* holds that the relation between Brahman and the *jīva* is both distinction and non-distinction, and that it is neither absolute difference nor absolute non-difference. In other words, their relation is both difference and non-difference i. e. *bhedā-bheda*<sup>15</sup>. In liberation also, the self does not become identical with the Lord, but remains in perpetual association with Him. This liberation is a form of *sāyujya* in which the self, in the form of a Gopī or Braja-lady, attains *Śrīkṛṣṇa* as its lover, and perpetually enjoys the sport of *rāsa* with him<sup>16</sup>.

The Śāṅkarite view that the *jīva* is absolutely identical with Brahman is rejected by Vallabha on the ground that in the sūtra '*aṁśo nānā-vyapadeśāt*', Bādarāyaṇa himself precisely describes the *jīva* as a part of Brahman. That the *jīva* is a part of Brahman is supported by the *Śruti* and the *Gītā* also. The *Śruti* says '*pādosya viśvābhūtāni*' i. e. all the entities are but one-fourth of Brahman. The *Gītā* also says, '*mamaivāṁśo jīvaloke*' etc. i. e. in the land of beings, the *jīva* is a part

of the Lord. It may be argued that if the *jīva* be a part of Brahman, the latter will be affected by the happiness, misery etc. of the former. In resolving the problem, Vallabha says that, just as light is not affected by the defects pertaining to the object illuminated, fire by its heat, and snow by its coolness, so Brahman is not affected by the happiness, misery etc. pertaining to the *jīva*<sup>17</sup>.

It may be objected that if the *jīva* be a part of Brahman, it should not be subjected to pains and sufferings. To this, Vallabha replies that, because of the Lord's will to play and enjoy, the divine qualities like sovereignty, bliss etc. are obscured in the *jīva*, as a result of which it loses its independence and suffers misery<sup>18</sup>. Vallabha does not accept the view of some Śāṅkarites that the *jīva* is a reflection Brahman in nescience. According to him, the *sūtra* 'abhāsa eva ca' represents the *jīva* as an appearance of Brahman, simply because the bliss-aspect of the latter is suppressed in the former, and not because the former is a reflection of the latter. If the *jīva* be a mere reflection, he argues, it will have to be regarded as unreal—a position which will go against scriptural texts like 'dvā suparṇā' etc. which declare the reality of both Brahman and the *jīva*. Besides, Vallabha asserts that there is no scriptural testimony to the contention that the *jīva* is a reflection of Brahman<sup>19</sup>. In the view of Vallabha and Viṭṭhala, Brahman, being devoid of colour and form, cannot be reflected, because a thing to be reflected must be endowed with colour and form. Moreover, both *avidyā* and Brahman being all-pervasive, neither of them can be reflected in the other<sup>20</sup>. Further, if the *jīva* be a reflection of Brahman in ignorance, then liberation, being a destruction of ignorance, will mean the destruction of the *jīva* itself<sup>21</sup>. This view will, therefore, render all moral efforts meaningless.

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3. na hi ātmana utpattiḥ śrūyate—*BSA*, 2. 3. 17; ātmā notpadyate... visphuliṅgavad-uccāraṇam notpattiḥ...ayam ātmā ajaro'maraḥ, na jāyate mriyate ity-evam-ādibhvaḥ...*ibid*.
4. jīvam bodhayati...*ibid*, 2. 3. 22.
5. yathā candanam ekadeśa-sthitam sarva-deha-sukham karoti...*ibid*, 2. 3. 23; see also *ibid*, 2. 3. 25.
6. ānandāśa-prakāśād-dhi brahma-bhāvo bhaviṣyati—*TDN*, under 1. 35; vyāpakatva-śrutis tasya bhagavattvena yujyate—*TDN*, 1. 53.4 ānandāśa-bhivyaktaḥ tu tatra brahmāṇḍa-koṭayaḥ—*BSA*, 2. 3. 30; see *ibid*, 2. 3. 30 and *TDN*, 1. 54.
7. tad-icchā-mātratas tasmād brahma-bhūtāśa-cetanaḥ. sṛṣṭyādaḥ, nirgatāḥ sarve...visphuliṅgā ivāgnes tu—*TDN*, 1. 27, 28.
8. īśvareccayā jīvasya bhagavad-dharma-tirobhāvaḥ...ānandāśas tu pūrvam eva tirohitaḥ—*BSA*, 3. 2. 5.
9. ānandāśa-prakāśād-dhi brahma-bhāvo bhaviṣyati—*TDN*, 1. 36 tatra bhagavad-icchaiva kevalā prayojikā—comt. on *ibid*.
10. See *Prameya-ratnārnava*, Ch. II.
11. tasya brahmaṇo guṇa prajñā-draṣṭvādayas te evātra jīva-sāra iti—*BSA*, 2. 3. 29.
12. vyapadeśa-daśāyām api ānandāśasya nātyantam asattvam...pūrvam bālye vidyamānam eva yauvane prakāśate tathā ānandāśasya svata eva vyakti-yogaḥ—*BSA*, 2. 3. 31; see 5 above.
13. jīvaḥ nāma brahmaṇaḥ aśaḥ...vedaika-samadhi gamyativāt—*BSA*, 2. 3. 43; sarva-viruddha-dharmāṇām āśrayaḥ bhagavān—*ibid*, 3. 2. 27.
14. jīvāt jagataḥ ca adhikam...draṣṭavyādi-vākyeṣu karma-kartṛ-vyapadeśāt—*BSA*, 2. 1. 22; see also Giridhara's comt. on *ibid*.
15. Giridhara's comt. on *BSA*, 2. 1. 22.
16. sāyujyam parama-puruṣārthaḥ—*BSA*, 1. 1. 3, p. 62; sāyujyam vānya-tbā tasmin...hari-sevayā—*TDN*, under 1.35.
17. prakāśa-śaityādayo dharmā nāgni-himādīnām duḥkha-dviṣṭatva-buddhi-janakās tathā duḥkham api parasya na, duḥkha-janakam—Puruṣottama' comt. on *ibid*, dvaita-buddhasya aśasyaiva duḥkhitvam na parasya—*BSA*, 2. 3. 46.

18. See *BSA*, 3. 2. 5 and 8 above.
19. na mithyā-svarūpaḥ ādhāsaḥ atra vivakṣitaḥ—*BSA*, 2. 3. 50 ; dvā suparṇā śruter api virudhyate—*TDN*, 1. 58.
20. brahmaṇaḥ nīrūpatvena pratibimbāśrayasya ajñānasya ca asvacchat-vena kva kasya pratibimbaḥ syāt. rūpavataḥ eva pratibimba-niyamāt ; sarvagatasya brahmaṇaḥ avidyāyām sarvagatāyām sattvena katham pratibimbaḥ syāt—*Vidvan-maṇḍana*, p. 24.
21. jīva-svarūpa-nāśaḥ sampadyate—*ibid* p. 24.

## CHAPTER

## 17

## THE SELF IN ŚRĪ CAITANYA-VEDĀNTA

## Introduction

The philosophy of Śrī Caitanya (1486-1533 A.D.) is known as Acintya-bhedābheda-vāda or the Theory of Unthinkable Difference-cum-non-difference. For, according to this system, the relation between the Absolute and the world and between the Absolute and the self is difference-cum-non-difference, and is, at the same time, unthinkable<sup>1</sup>. In the view of Śrī Caitanya, the Absolute or Bhagavat, identified with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is endowed with three trans-empirical powers, namely, *svarūpa-śakti* or *parā-śakti*—the essential or highest power, *tatasthā-śakti* or *jīva-śakti*—the peripheral power or self-power, and *vahiraṅgā-śakti* or *māyā-śakti*—the external power<sup>2</sup>. The *svarūpa-śakti* forms the essence of Bhagavat, while the *tatasthā-śakti* and the *māyā-śakti* are manifested as the *jīvas* and the material world, respectively.

## Nature of the Self

The *jīva* or self is a manifestation of the *jīva-śakti* of Bhagavat, the Ultimate. This *śakti* or energy is called *tatasthā* or peripheral, because it occupies an intermediary position between *svarūpa-śakti*, the essential power of the Lord, and *māyā-śakti*, the source of the material world. Now, since the *jīva-śakti* is grounded on Bhagavat, the empirical self is, in reality, a part of Bhagavat<sup>3</sup>. But, as it is influenced by the

18. See BSA, 3. 2. 5 and 8 above.
19. na mithyā-svarūpaḥ ādhāsaḥ atra vivakṣitaḥ—BSA, 2. 3. 50 ; dvā suparṇā śruter api virudhyate—TDN, 1. 58.
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external or *bahiraṅgā* power called *māyā-śakti*, it cannot be brought under the *svarūpa-śakti* which is never influenced by the external power. However, because of its close affinity with Bhagavat, the self has the innate capacity to liberate itself from the grip of *māyā-śakti*. When the self develops this power in full, it is released from bondage, becomes a part of the *svarūpa-śakti*, and is no more influenced by the *māyā-śakti*.

The self is distinct from the body, the senses, the mind and so on, but under delusion created by the *māyā-śakti*, it wrongly identifies itself with the psycho-physical organism. The self is indicated by the term '*aham*' or '*I*' which, however, is to be distinguished from the *prākṛta ahaṁkāra* or empirical ego which is an effect of *prakṛti*. In other words, the self is the real ego which is not influenced by the impure *māyā-śakti*<sup>4</sup>.

The self is an integral unity of will-to-be, will-to-know and will-to-enjoy, and, hence, it is the principle underlying all the activities, cognitions and feelings of the individual. Further, as it is connected with the *hlādinī-śakti* or bliss-aspect, in particular, of the Lord, it has bliss as its inherent attribute. Accordingly, the self is full of bliss and love.

Consciousness or intelligence is not only the essence but also the essential attribute of the self. The self is, therefore, both *caitanya* and *cetana*—knowledge and knower. And since consciousness forms both the essence and the essential attribute of it, the self is self-luminous. By the instrumentality of consciousness, the self reveals not only the not-self but also itself to itself<sup>5</sup>. The consciousness which forms the essential attribute of the self is pure and indivisible and is, accordingly, to be distinguished from the impure consciousness produced by sensecontact.

Like intelligence, existence also forms the very essence of the *jīva* or self. The *jīva* is self-existent and retains its identity under all circumstances. It follows from this that the self is not subject to creation and destruction i. e. it is eternal<sup>6</sup>.

It may here be objected that Bhagavat being all-existence and the only ultimate cause, the *jīva* must be regarded as an effect having origination. How can, then, the *jīva* be eternal and immortal? To this, Baladeva replies that the self is, of course, an effect, but the term 'effect' here means a manifestation of the ultimate consciousness and not a fresh creation. The *jīva* is latent in the being of Bhagavat, the absolute Consciousness; it requires only to be manifested. Accordingly, the self is both an effect and an eternal entity. And as the *jīva* lies within the being of Bhagavat, the eternality of the former is not in contradiction with the concept of the latter as the first cause and as all-existence<sup>7</sup>.

The self is an ever-active free agent, since activity is one of its essential attributes<sup>8</sup>. In the empirical stage, it performs actions and reaps their fruits. In the transcendental level also, its activity does not cease, as it is in eternal sport with the Lord. Activity in the transcendental level is, of course, divine and is confined to the pure *sattva* quality. The self is, thus, not passive or a mere on-looker, as the Sāṁkhyaists hold. The Śāṅkarite view that the self is inactive is also not acceptable to Baladeva, who argues that the very expressions *asti* (exists) *bhāti* (shines) etc. indicate activities. He, however, maintains that the agency of the self is not necessarily perpetual; it depends upon the volition of the self which may or may not be active as it pleases<sup>9</sup>.

Though the self is of the nature of *cit* or consciousness, it is inferior to and different from Bhagavat, because the self is influenced by *māyā-śakti* and is, consequently, bound to the world, while Bhagavat is never so. Even in liberation, the self retains its individual identity. It is, thus, different from Bhagavat both in *svarūpa* or essence and in *sāmarthya* or capability<sup>10</sup>. Even then, the self is identical with Bhagavat, the ground or ultimate source. The Lord, thus, says, 'The immutable part of the *jīva* in the land of beings is my part'<sup>11</sup>. Being a part of Bhagavat, the self shares with him the characteristics

of *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*—existence, consciousness and bliss, respectively—as well as the attributes of eternality, changelessness etc. Accordingly, the self is, in essence, *nitya-nirmala* or eternally pure. But since the self is an atomic part of Bhagavat, it does not possess full *cit* and full *ānanda*; it owns only a *kaṇa* or infinitesimal measure of *cit* and *ānanda*<sup>12</sup>.

Being a small particle of consciousness and bliss, the self is atomic in magnitude; it occupies only a small part of the body. This view is said to be supported by the *Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣad* which describes the size of the *jīva* as equal to 'the one-hundredth part of the one-hundredth part of the edge of a hair'<sup>13</sup>. Though the *jīva* is atomic in size, it can pervade the whole body by its attribute of consciousness, just as a flame pervades the whole room by its rays, or a flower pervades a large space by its smell<sup>14</sup>.

The selves have no independence. Being atomic parts of Bhagavat, they are always dependent on him. Their very existence, cognition and activity are possible only because Bhagavat lies as their ground. They are manifested by Bhagavat out of himself and are sustained by him. It is Bhagavat, the Lord, who is always working through the *jīvas*. Bhagavat cannot, however, be held responsible for the pleasures and pains of the *jīvas*, because he determines the courses of the *jīvas* in accordance with their past deeds which are without any beginning. If it is asked as to why the Lord endows different wills and actions to different *jīvas*, Balādeva replies that every individual *jīva* has some distinct innate nature, and the Lord determines the wills and actions of a *jīva* according to that innate nature<sup>15</sup>.

The self is not one but many. Bhagavat manifests himself as a single personality through the *svarūpa-śakti* or primary power, and as many *jīvas* through the *taṭastha-śakti* or intermediary power. That the *jīvas* are many in the empirical level is accepted by all on the ground of the distinction of mind, body, birth, death etc. of every individual. According to Śrī

Caitanya, however, even in liberation or the transcendental level, the selves are many. The liberated selves are different from Bhagavat, and they occupy different positions as his *parikaras* or attendants in the realm of spiritual existence. In liberation, the self does not merge into the Absolute, as the Śāṅkarites hold, but retains its identity as an eternal spiritual atom, and remains in service to the Lord for ever<sup>16</sup>. It is, thus, said by the Lord, "Those who, with the help of this knowledge, attain my nature are not born at the time of creation; nor do they suffer pains at the time of annihilation"<sup>17</sup>.

The selves are, of course, similar to one another, because they are all essentially divine in nature. But yet they are different from one another, for every *jīva* is endowed with distinct and indivisible unit of consciousness. Against the Śāṅkarite theory of one self, Balādeva argues that since the selves are described in the *Vedas* as centres of eternal consciousness, they must be regarded as many. But though the *jīvas* are many, each of them reflects the same unity of the *svarūpa-śakti* or primary power of the Lord<sup>18</sup>.

Every *jīva* is a Bhagavat in miniature. Bhagavat is one and self-complete, while the *jīvas* are many, each of them sharing only a part of the Lord. Bhagavat is all-existence, all-consciousness and all-bliss, while the *jīva* is atomic existence, atomic consciousness and atomic bliss.

### The Self and the Absolute

The selves are nothing but the manifestations of the *taṭasthā-śakti* or peripheral power of the Absolute. And since the relation between the Absolute and its *śakti* is unthinkable difference-cum-non-difference, that between the Absolute and the selves is also of the same nature.

According to the school of Śrī Caitanya, neither the acceptance of identity nor that of difference can solve the problem.

of the relation between the Absolute and the self. The acceptance of identity will resolve the self into an illusion, while the acceptance of difference will create an unbridgable gulf between the Absolute and the self. On the other hand, neither identity nor difference can be thrown away as unnecessary, because our reason claims identity to be the truth, while experience testifies to difference as a fact. It is, therefore, held that the relation between Brahman and the self is *acintya-bhedābheda* or unthinkable difference-cum-non-difference, because it involves both difference and non-difference, while it is beyond our comprehension as to how these two opposites are reconciled. This, however, means not that '*acintyatva*' or incomprehensibility itself is the relation, but that there is '*acintyatva*' in the relation<sup>19</sup>.

Śrī Jīva says that this relation of unthinkable difference-cum-non-difference is found to exist between a substance and its quality or power. To follow his argument, *śakti* or power must be regarded as different from the thing in which it inheres, since they cannot be conceived as identical with each other. On the other hand, *śakti* must be considered as identical with the thing, because they cannot be imagined as different from each other. And, as simultaneous existence of identity and difference is contradictory, the relation is to be regarded as *acintya* or unthinkable<sup>20</sup>. Thus, to follow Śrī Jīva's example 'fire' and the 'power of burning' cannot be regarded as quite distinct from each other, since one cannot exist without the other. Also, they are not exactly identical, for in that case both the terms 'fire' and 'burns' meaning the same thing, it will be superfluous to say 'fire burns'. Moreover, the power of burning of fire can be neutralised by medicine or *mantra*, which would be impossible if 'fire' and 'burning' were identical<sup>21</sup>. Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa also holds the same view and says that without the idea of 'unthinkability' the relation of identity-and-difference between quality and the qualified cannot be explained<sup>22</sup>.

In the same way, the relation between the Absolute and its *śakti* is neither absolute identity nor absolute difference but unthinkable difference-cum-identity. The acceptance of either absolute difference or absolute identity between the two cannot help us explain passages like '*svābhāvīkī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca*' where *jñāna*, *bala* and *kriyā* i. e. knowledge, strength and action have been declared as the *svābhāvika* or natural *śaktis* of the Absolute<sup>23</sup>. Likewise, it is claimed that in the *Śruti* there are passages like '*viñānam ānandaṁ brahma*' and others which cannot be adequately explained without resorting to the relation of *acintya-bhedābheda*.

Accordingly, the relation between the Absolute and the selves—which are nothing but the transformations of the *atasthā śakti* of the Absolute—is also *acintya-bhedābheda*. The selves cannot be regarded as identical with the Absolute, since in that case, the imperfections of the selves will have to be ascribed to Brahman also. If the identity between the Absolute and the selves is to be reconciled with the perfectness of the Absolute, then the *jīvas* will have to be regarded as illusory. But this will go against the *Śruti* which distinguishes the *jīvas* from the Absolute. If, on the other hand, the Absolute and the *jīvas* are regarded as absolutely different, non-duality declared by the *Śruti* and claimed by logic will be contradicted.

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4. O. B. L. Kapoor, *The Philosophy and Religion of Śrī Caitanya*, p. 133.
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11. *BG*, 15. 7.
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13. *PS*, p. 25 ; Kapoor, *op cit*, p. 133 ; *CC*, Madhya, 19 *Śv Up*, 5. 9.
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15. sraṣṭuḥ karma-sāpekṣatvāt—*BSG*, 2. 1. 34 ; tāratamyāñ ca—*Prameya-ratnāvalī*, 6. 1.
16. saṁkhyātīto hi cit-kaṇaḥ—*CC*, Madhya, 19 ; see *ibid*, Madhya, 14 ; *PS*, p. 24.
17. *BG*, 14. 2 ; see B. K. Banerji, *Bhāratīya-darśane Mukti-vād*, pp. 64-5.
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20. *BhS*, p. 16 and *Sarva-samvādinī* on it.
21. *Sarva-samvādinī* on *BhS*, p. 15.
22. nirbhede api vastuni guṇa-guṇi-bhāvōjjṛmbhakaḥ viśeṣaḥ dharmī gṛhyate...acintyatvaṁ vinā nirbhede vastuni ubhayōjjṛmbhāṇa-sambhavāt—Baladeva's comt. on *Siddhānta-ratna*, 1. 21.
23. *Sarva-samvādinī* on *BhS*, pp. 11-12.

## CHAPTER

## 18

## THE SELF IN PĀŚUPATA-ŚAIVISM

## Introduction

The system of Pāśupata is known as Nakulīśa or Lakulīśa also, since Nakulīśa or Lakulīśa, who is looked upon as an incarnation of Śiva, is declared as the founder of this system<sup>1</sup>. According to this system, Śiva is the only and the supreme cause of the universe, all other entities being his effects. These effects are of three kinds, namely, (i) *vidyā* or right knowledge ; (ii) *kalā* or non-conscious entities and (iii) *Paśu* or the bound self.

## Nature of the Self

The self under bondage is regarded by the Pāśupatas as an effect, since it is bound, produced, favoured, veiled by nescience and subjected to time by the will of Śiva<sup>2</sup>. The self is endowed with consciousness which is its essential quality and not an acquired one, as the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas held<sup>3</sup>. In reality, the consciousness of the self is infinite, but it becomes limited when it is veiled by ignorance. When this ignorance is removed by spiritual practices, the consciousness of the self reveals itself again in its infinite nature. The self is called bound when its knowledge is veiled and limited and, liberated when its infinite consciousness is manifested. The self is called *kṣetrajña*, because it pervades the unconscious effects—*prakṛti*, the sense-organs, the motor-organs and the physical objects—by its quality of knowledge. The self is endowed with the powers of



hearing, touching, seeing, tasting, smelling, thinking, speaking, comprehending etc. It is the knower of external objects, the experiencer of pleasures, pains etc. and the witness of all that happens to the individual life<sup>4</sup>. In its bound or empirical state, the self is called *paśu*. In this state, it is associated with *pāśa* i. e. the sense-organs, the motor-organs, the physical body etc. This bound or empirical self, being dependent and subject to birth and death, is regarded as non-eternal<sup>5</sup>. In its real or transcendental nature manifested in liberation, the self is absolutely free from all the *pāśas* and the empirical qualities. Accordingly, the real self is endowed with infinite knowledge and is devoid of birth and death. In other words, it is omniscient, unborn, immortal and eternal<sup>6</sup>. According to this system, the self is neither atomic nor intermediary in magnitude, but is all-pervasive<sup>7</sup>. The world of fourteen levels is the field of birth, death and activity of the self.

Bhāsarvajña has divided the selves into two classes, namely, impure or tainted and pure or taintless. Tainted selves are those which are associated with the bodies and the sense-organs, while the taintless selves are those which are devoid of them. The taintless selves are, again, of three types, namely, (i) those which are not attached to the sense-organs and the objects of enjoyment, (ii) those which are in the state of steadiness, and (iii) those which are completely isolated from *prakṛti* and its effects. Selves under bondage are of three types, namely, those of gods, men and other creatures like beasts, insects etc<sup>8</sup>.

The existence of the self is inferred from the facts of pleasure, pain, desire, aversion, volition and consciousness. In other words, the self as the substratum of these qualities must be accepted as a real entity<sup>9</sup>. The selves are different in different individuals and are therefore many.

#### The Self and Śiva

Śiva is the abode or substratum and also the lord of the self. In all its activities and experiences, the self is controlled

by Śiva. Even the facts of bondage and liberation of the self are said to be due to the will of Śiva, the ultimate cause. Of course, Śiva controls the self in accordance with the merits and demerits accruing from its past actions. The self undergoes bondage because of its own bad actions conjoined with the displeasure of God. In a like manner, it attains liberation because of its own endeavour—penance, meditation, worship etc.—conjoined with the command and grace of God<sup>10</sup>. *Kālās* comprising the five physical elements and the sense-organs are the fetters by which the self is bound. When the self is entangled by these elements, it becomes dependent, non-sovereign, overpowered by ignorance, attached to the effects or wordly objects, and confined to an embodied life. *Vidyā* or true knowledge destroys these entanglements, reveals the real nature of the self and thereby helps it attain liberation<sup>11</sup>. The idea of bondage and liberation found in this system implies that the divine powers of knowledge and lordship are inherent in the self. They are suppressed in the state of bondage because of the influence of the fetters, and are manifested in the state of liberation. According to the Pāśupata philosophy, a liberated self is omniscient and, hence, is endowed with the knowledge of itself and also of other selves<sup>12</sup>. Here, liberation is not only the total extinction of pains and sufferings, as in Sāṃkhya, but also the acquisition of absolute independence, lordship and super-natural or divine powers of knowledge and action all of which are, however, granted by Śiva<sup>13</sup>. Again, liberation is not merely the self's dissociation from *prakṛti* and its modification, as in Sāṃkhya, but also its union with Śiva. This union of the self with Śiva, which is the ultimate end of life, is called *Yoga*. *Yoga* in the Pāśupata system means both the suppression of mental modes, as in the Pātañjala philosophy and the union of the individual self with Śiva, through trance or complete absorption of the mind in him<sup>14</sup>. According to the Pāśupatas, the liberated self does not merge in Śiva and become one with him. Liberation accepted here is a form of *sāyujya-*



*mukti*, in which the self remains in perpetual association with the Lord Śiva<sup>15</sup>, and acquires omniscience, omnipotence, lordship and other qualities belonging to him. Thus, liberation, according to the Pāsupatas, is on the one hand deliverance from worldly pains and sufferings and on the other hand the attainment of all the excellent qualities of Śiva<sup>16</sup>. *Gaṇakārikā* says that the liberated self acquires miraculous powers of knowledge and action. Kauṇḍinya, therefore, describes the liberated self as beyond the jurisdiction of Paśupati<sup>17</sup>. A liberated self is, however, not quite similar to Śiva, because the qualities of omniscience, omnipotence etc. pertaining to the liberated self are acquired, while they are essential or natural to Śiva, and because the liberated self is devoid of the cosmic activities of creation, sustenance etc., whereas Śiva is endowed with them.

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2. paśutvāt kāravatvena vyākhyātaḥ—*PB*, 5. 47.
3. cetane ātma-śabdaḥ—puruṣaś cetanaḥ—*ibid*, 5. 3; see 12 below.
4. sa ca śrotā spraṣṭā draṣṭā rasayitā ghrātā mantā boddhā...puruṣaś cetano bhoktā kṣetrajñāḥ pudgalo janaḥ. anirvedo' mṛtaḥ sākṣī jīvātmā paribhuḥ paraḥ—*PB*, 5. 3.
5. paśyanāt pāśanāt ca paśavaḥ tatra pāśāḥ nāma kārya-karaṇākhyāḥ kalāḥ—tābhiḥ pāśitaḥ baddhaḥ sanni-ruddhaḥ śabdādi-viśaya-paravaśāś ca bhūtvā avatiṣṭhante ity-ataḥ avagamyate asvātantryam anaiśvaryam bandhaḥ—*ibid*, 1. 1. 1.
6. nityātmā—*Pāsupata-sūtra*, 5. 3; ajaḥ—*ibid*, 5. 4; akṣayaḥ—ajaraḥ—*ibid*, 1. 35; amaraḥ—*ibid*, 1. 36.
7. cf. sati vibhutve—*PB*, 5. 3; vibhutve api—*ibid*, 1. 1.
8. *Sinha*, *op cit.*, p. 86.
9. tasya sukha-duḥkhecchā-dveṣa-prayatna-caitanyādibhir liṅgair adhigamaḥ kriyate ity-arthaḥ—*PB*, 5. 3.

10. tasmāt prasādāt sa duḥkhāntaḥ prāpyate. na tu jñāna-vairāgya-dharmaishvarya-tyāga-mātrāt—*ibid*, 1. 1; apramādī gacched duḥkhānām antam īśa-prasādāt—*ibid*, 5. 40.
11. cf. vidyā...sva-parānya-prakāśikā pradīpavat—*ibid*, 4. 1; see also, *ibid*, 3. 19. and 5. 47; Sinha, *op cit.*, p. 87.
12. ekā jñāna-śaktiḥ aparimitena jñeyena anekena anekadhā upacaryate. sphaṭikādityavat ca asya sarvataḥ pravartate ityārthaḥ—*PB*, 1. 22; see also *ibid*, 5. 40.
13. asya tu jñānam asti...duḥkhānām atyantam paramāpoho guṇāvāptis ca param bhavātīti—tasmāt prasādāt sarva-duḥkhāpoho guṇāvāptis ca—*ibid*, 5. 40.
14. ayaṁ tu yukta eva na muktaḥ—*ibid*, 5. 8; ātmeśvara-sāmyogo yogah—*ibid*, 1. 1.
15. rudra-sāyujya-nirdeśāt—*ibid*, 1. 24; labhate rudra-sāyujyam—*Pāsupata sūtra*, 5. 33; sākṣāt rudreṇ saha sāmyogaḥ, sāyujyam—*PB* on *ibid*.
16. kriyā-śaktir-api asti neti? ucyate—asti—sarva-jñāna-śakti-rūpā—*PB*, 123; prabhutvaṁ vibhutvaṁ guṇadharmitvaṁ ca vyākhyātam—*ibid*, 1. 26; see *ibid*, 1. 27; see 13 above.
17. *Gaṇakārikā*, 6 and *Ratna-tīkā* on it; sarvatra cāpratihatagatir bhavati—*Pāsupata-sūtra*, 1. 37; mahēśvareṇāpi apratibandha-dharmitvam apratighātaḥ—*PB* on *ibid*; see *ibid*, 1. 2, 8.

## CHAPTER

## 19

## THE SELF IN ŚAIVA SIDDHĀNTA

## Introduction

Śaiva-Siddhānta accepts three ultimate, distinct and primordial realities, namely, (i) Pati or Brahman identified with Śiva, (ii) paśu or the bound self, and (iii) pāśa or bond in the form of the world<sup>1</sup>. Of them, paśu and pāśa are finite and dependent on Pati, while Pati is infinite and independent. Pati is the Absolute or the Lord, being the very source and ground of the other two. Paśu or the bound self, being under the grip of pāśa or the world of enchantment, cannot realise the real nature of Pati and also of itself. In liberation, the self realises the nature of Pati as well as the true essence of its own being.

According to the Śaiva-Siddhāntins, Śiva is endowed with two powers—*cit-śakti* or conscious power and *acit-śakti* or non-conscious power. Usually, the *cit-śakti* is called *śakti* and the *acit-śakti*, *māyā*. *Māyā*, the non-conscious power of Śiva, is eternal, pervasive, beginningless and endless. It is not an effect, as it has no material cause. It is the root-cause and material of the world. It is pervasive, since it permeates all its effects. It is devoid of the *guṇas* or qualities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, as distinct from *prakṛti* which is of the nature of these three *guṇas*. *Māyā* has two phases: pure and impure. From the pure phase of it, the bodies of the five pure principles of Śiva, Śakti, Sadāśiva, Īśvara and Śuddhavidyā are produced, while from its impure phase, the five *kañcukas* and the impure principles evolve<sup>2</sup>.

## Nature of the Self

In the view of the Śaiva-Siddhāntins, the bound self is nothing but Śiva confined by the *kañcukas*. The impure *māyā* energised by Śiva's power creates *kāla* or time, *niyati* or destiny, *kalā* or limited creative power, *vidyā* or limited knowledge, and *rāga* or attachment. Thus, impure *māyā* first creates the principle of *kāla* or time which helps production. After the creation of time, *māyā* produces *niyati* which determines casual relation i. e. relation of *dharma* and *adharma* with their effects. After the production of *niyati*, *māyā* brings forth *kalā* which attaches *āṇava-mala* to the bound selves and manifests their limited agency. After *kalā*, comes forth *vidyā* of the nature of manifestation, which manifests limited knowledge and establishes a relation between it and the objects. After *vidyā*, emerges *rāga* which manifests attachment and causes the self to perform voluntary actions. These five principles of *kāla*, *niyati*, *kalā*, *vidyā* and *rāga* are called five *kañcukas*, Śiva confined by these five *kañcukas* assumes the state of *puruṣa-tattva* or the bound self, the experiencer of pleasure, pain etc<sup>3</sup>. Accordingly, *puruṣa* or the bound self is an entity which is both pure and impure; it shares both the aspects of Śiva and the five *kañcukas* evolving from the non-conscious power of Śiva.

According to the Śaiva-Siddhāntins, the self is of the nature of consciousness. In its essence, it shares the nature of Śiva and is, therefore omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient and eternal. But because of its relation with the *kañcukas*, it becomes limited or atomic, as a result of which, it is endowed with limited knowledge and power, and is subjected to birth and death<sup>4</sup>. It is objected that the self, being of the nature of Śiva, cannot be related to the bonds. To this, the Śaivites reply that the relation between the self and the bond is without any beginning, and is, therefore, not produced by any cause. The bonds or *pāśas* which bind the self are, according to *Mṛgendra-Tantra*, four in number, namely *malaja* or born of nescience, *karmaja* or born

of merits and demerits, *māyīya* or born of the subtle and gross bodies, and *tirodhāyaka* or Śiva's power of veiling. Of them, *mala* or nescience which is innate and beginning-less is the principal bond for it is nescience that veils the knowledge of the self.<sup>5</sup>

Though during bondage the self, being influenced by taints, is not similar to Śiva, in liberation it regains the nature of Śiva by his grace. The self is, thus, not eternally free, while Śiva is, since he is untouched by taints<sup>6</sup>. The selves are different in different organisms, and are, therefore, many. They are of three classes, namely, *viññāna-kala* or those tainted only with *mala*, *pralaya-kala* or those tainted with *mala* and *karma*, and *sakala* or those tainted with *mala*, *karma* and *māyā*<sup>7</sup>. The *Mrgendra-Tantra* holds that the individual self is always endowed with consciousness and knowledge. Consciousness is an essential attribute of the self, and not an adventitious one, as is held by the Naiyāyikas. The self is essentially conscious and active. Further, it is all-pervasive, eternal, omniscient and omnipotent. It is held that the self is said to be endowed with these characteristics on the basis of the *Śruti* which declares that with the destruction of the bonds in liberation the self becomes similar to Brahman and is endowed with the qualities of all-pervasiveness purity, eternality, omniscience and omnipotence. And as a non-existent entity cannot be produced afresh, these natures manifested in liberation are to be regarded not as acquired, but as essential to the self<sup>8</sup>.

The self attains liberation when its bonds or *pāśas* are destroyed. The *Mrgendra-Tantra* says that the practice of eight-fold *yoga* is the means for attaining liberation. Ultimately, however, Śiva is the cause of the self's liberation, since it is by the grace of Śiva that the self attains liberation<sup>9</sup>.

### The Self and Śiva

The relation between Śiva and the self is one of difference and non-difference. During the state of bondage, *paśu* or

the bound self is different from Śiva, but yet it is not wholly different from him, because it is Śiva who becomes the self under the influence of the beginningless taints or bonds<sup>10</sup>.

In liberation, the self becomes one with Śiva, but yet the former remains in the eternal service to the latter. Here the self is said to become one with Śiva not in the sense that it is totally identical with Śiva, but in the sense that it does not look upon itself as other than Śiva. The Siddhāntins use the term '*advaita*' to denote the relation between the self and Brahman or Śiva, where the term '*advaita*' means not one-ness, but non-duality or *ananyatva*. In the words of Mr Sivaraman, "It is not negation of two but a case of negation of duality entailed by two. Not-being-two in the sense of positive one-ness is not affirmed of Brahman, but only duality is denied of it. This implies that the relation between Brahman and the self is neither external nor internal, neither *bheda* nor *abheda*'<sup>11</sup>.

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2. K. Sivaraman, *Saivism in Philosophical Perspective*, p. 478.
3. puṁso'jña-kartṛtārtham māyātas tattva-pañcakam bhavati. kālo niyatis ca tathā kalā ca vidyā ca rāgaś ca—*TP*, 22.
4. See *Vṛtti* on *Mrgendra-Tantra*, i. 7; sā ca śaktiḥ sarva-jñāna-kriyārūpā śivavat sarvāṇūnām vidyate—*Vṛtti* on *ibid*, *Vidyā-pāda*, 42, 4. 2
5. *Tātparya-dipika* on *TP*, 5; anādi-mala-sambandhāt malinatvam aṇau sthitam—quoted in *ibid*; pāśās caturvidhāḥ syuḥ puṁso mala-karmajau matau prathamau. māyīya-tirodhāyaka-śiva-śakti-samud-bhavau cānyau—*TP*, 17.

6. cf. muktātmano'pi śivaḥ kimtv-ete tat-prasādato muktāḥ ;—*TP*, 6.
7. paśavas trividhā jñeyā vijñāna-pralaya-kevalau sakalaḥ. malayuktas tatrādyo mala-karma-yuto dvitīyaḥ syāt. mala-māyā-karma-yutaḥ sakalaḥ—*TP*, 8-9.
8. *Mrgendra-Tantra* and *Vṛtti*, i. 7.
9. See *ibid*, yoga-pāda ; ete tat-prasādato muktāḥ—*TP*, 6.
10. pāśānte śivatā-śruteḥ—*Mrgendra-Tantra* i. 7 ; atyanta-pari śuddhātmety-ato'yaṁ śiva ucyate—quoted in *Tātparya-dīpikā* on *TP*, 6.
11. Śivaraman, *op cit*, pp. 143-4.

## CHAPTER

## 20

## THE SELF IN ŚRĪKAṆṬHA-ŚAIVISM

## Introduction

Śrīkaṇṭha (11th century A. D. ?), like Rāmānuja, advocates the theory of Viśiṣṭādvaita or Qualified Monism. He maintains that the selves and the material world are *viśeṣaṇas* or attributes and that Brahman, the Absolute in its essence, is the *viśeṣya* or substantive qualified by the selves and matter—*cid-acid-viśiṣṭa*<sup>1</sup>. Śrīkaṇṭha identifies the highest Reality or Brahman with S'iva who is all-auspicious and all-bliss. The terms 'Brahman', 'parātmun' and 'Paramātman', therefore, denote the same deity S'iva.

## Nature of the Self

The self is of the nature of consciousness. Consciousness is not only the essence but also the quality of the self. The self is, thus, both knowledge and the knower. Knowledge forming the essence of the self is inseparable from the self ; it is not an adventitious quality generated in the self through its contact with the mind, the senses and the objects.

Like Brahman itself, the self is also in essence omniscient and omnipotent. But its innate supreme knowledge and power having been obscured and limited by the power of māyā, the self identifies itself with the mind-body-complex, and possesses limited knowledge and power. Again, like Brahman, the self is ever-pure, ever-free, ever-perfect and ever-blissful. Also, it is

eternal, being neither produced nor destroyed, and hence is free from birth and death. But during the empirical state, it seems to be subjected to impurity, bondage, imperfection, sorrows and sufferings, and to be moving in the cycle of birth and death<sup>2</sup>.

The self is an *aṁśa* or part of Brahman, and eternally qualifies it as its attribute or body. During the *kāryāvasthā* or effect-state, the self qualifies in its gross form, and during the *kāraṇāvasthā* or causal state, it qualifies in its subtle form.

The self is atomic in magnitude, as is inferred from its movement from one world to another. If the self were all-pervasive, it is argued, it could not move in this way. Moreover, if the self were all-pervasive, it would always come in contact with all the objects, and would, accordingly, perceive all the object at all time. But, as it does not actually happen so, the self is not to be regarded as all-pervasive. The atomic self resides in the heart of the individual being, wherefrom it spreads its quality of knowledge throughout the body, just as a drop of sandal-wood-paste applied to a part of the body cools the whole body, or just as a gem placed in the corner of a room illumines the whole room<sup>3</sup>. Accordingly, it is possible for the self to experience all that happens in the entire body.

The self is a free and active agent, because it can attend to or abstain from an action according to its sweet will. Being a free agent, the self experiences the fruits of its own actions. It is true that the volitions of the self are partly dependent upon its *adṛṣṭas* and merits and demerits, but these *adṛṣṭas* are also the results of the self's past free actions. The self, however, cannot consciously act in accordance with its *adṛṣṭas*, since the *adṛṣṭas* are not known to it. It is Śiva who makes the self act in conformity with its merits and demerits and experience the fruits of its actions. The self is thus dependent on Śiva for the performance of its actions and also for getting the fruits thereof<sup>4</sup>. The self is not one but many, as it is different in different individuals.

### The Self and Brahman

Śrīkaṇṭha holds that between the self and Brahman or Śiva, there is *svagata-bheda* or internal difference, because the self is a part of Brahman or Śiva. Being a part of Śiva, the self is pervaded by him, just as a piece of wood is pervaded by fire. The self is, therefore, non-different from Śiva, though not identical with him. The scriptural passage 'The self is Brahman' does not mean identity between the self and Brahman; it simply connotes non-difference between them. Of course, through spiritual and *yogic* practices, the self can acquire some of the qualities of Śiva, but it can never be identical with him. Even in the state of liberation, the self maintains its individuality<sup>5</sup>. The self is an attribute and also a part of Brahman, just as the light of a luminous thing is an attribute and also a part of that thing. Again, just as the attributes form a part of the substance qualified by them, and are yet different from it, so the selves, being related as attributes, are the parts of Brahman qualified by them and are yet different from it<sup>6</sup>. Further, the self is described as the body or effect of Brahman which is the soul or the cause.

The Advaitins hold that the individual self is nothing but Brahman itself limited by the adjunct of *antaḥ-karṇa* or internal organ. Accordingly, in their view, the self is identical with Brahman, just as *ghaṭākāśa* i.e. the *ākāśa* or space limited by a jar is identical with the vast *ākāśa*. Śrīkaṇṭha does not accept this view on the ground that it contradicts scriptural passage, like 'All creatures are a part of Brahman' etc. Moreover, according to him, Brahman cannot be limited by any adjunct, since the adjuncts exist within Brahman itself. Further, if the selves and Brahman be identical, there will be no difference among the selves, and, in that case, the difference of experiences found in different selves will remain unexplained<sup>7</sup>.

It is Śiva who brings bondage and liberation upon the self. He binds the selves by concealing their real nature and attributes.



in accordance with the beginningless flow of impurities in the form of merits and demerits. Again, he liberates them by revealing their essential nature and attributes, in harmony with their spiritual practices. It is by the grace of Śiva that, after the exhaustion of the merits and demerits, the self acquires supreme knowledge, delight and power. The self cannot attain liberation, nor can it acquire these powers, independently of Īśvara<sup>8</sup>.

The essential nature of the self as supreme light or pure consciousness is concealed during the state of bondage, and is revealed in the state of liberation by the grace of the Lord. In the state of liberation, the self is manifested in its real nature i. e. as pure consciousness and bliss. Like Brahman, the self is then endowed with unlimited knowledge, bliss and power. The self, thus, becomes similar to Brahman in nature, but is not identical with it<sup>9</sup>. The *S'ruti* 'The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman itself' means that the self which experiences Brahman becomes like Brahman; it does not indicate indentity between the two. According to Śrīkaṇṭha, the released self becomes equal to Brahman in respect of enjoyment alone, and not in respect of the cosmic acts of creation, maintenance and destruction<sup>10</sup>.

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3. anur-ātmā—*ibid*, 2. 3. 23; yathā candana-binduḥ ekadeśasthaḥ api sakala-deha-vyāpi sukhaṁ janayati—*ibid*, 2. 3. 24.
4. ātmā kartā eva—*ibid*, 2. 3. 33; jīvaḥ parameśvara-sahāyaḥ pravartamānaḥ—*ibid*, 2. 3. 41.

5. jīvātmā parameśvarasya amśaḥ...jīva-brahmaṇoḥ vyāpya-vyāpaka-bhāvena ananyatvam—*ibid*, 2. 3. 42.
6. prakāśa-viśiṣṭānāṁ maṇi-prabhṛtīnāṁ prakāśaḥ viśiṣṭaika-deśaḥ yathā amśaḥ tad-vat jīva-śarīratayā jīva-viśiṣṭasya brahmaṇaḥ amśaḥ jīvaḥ—*ibid*, 2. 3. 45.
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10. parameśvara-sāmye api jagat-sṛṣṭy-adi-vyāpāra-varjam eva—*ibid*, 4. 4. 17.

## CHAPTER

# 21

## THE SELF IN VĪRA-ŚAIVISM

### Introduction

According to Vira-Śaivism or *Ṣaṭ-sthala-siddhānta*, Brahman is the Absolute. Like other Śaivites, the Vira-Śaivites also identify Brahman with Śiva. Śrīpati (14th century A. D.), the systematic exponent of Vira-Śaivism advocates a philosophy of Dualistic Monism, which he calls *Viśiṣṭādvaita*, and recognises both difference and non-difference between Brahman and the selves, and also between Brahman and its energy which expresses itself as the world<sup>1</sup>. In the view of the Vira-Śaivites, Brahman or Śiva is endowed with *śakti* or power. The *śakti* of Śiva is of two kinds—*cit-śakti*, or conscious power and *acit-śakti* or non-conscious power. *Acit śakti*, otherwise called *māyā*, has two aspects—*śuddha* or pure and *aśuddha* or impure. The pure aspect of *māyā* forms the material of the pure creation lying beyond *prakṛti* and the five *kañcukas*. From the impure aspect of *māyā*, first, the five *kañcukas* or coverings of *kāla*, *niyati*, *rāga*, *vidyā* and *kalā* are produced, and then the well-known Sāṃkhyan principles from *prakṛti* onwards are evolved. Śiva confined by the five *kañcukas* appears as the *puruṣa* or the empirical self.

### Nature of the Self

The Vira-Śaivites, regard the individual self as atomic in size, and not as ubiquitous, on the ground that the *Vedas*

declare the self as departing from some body and moving to other spheres of existence. They argue that, if the self were ubiquitous, it could not move in this way. *Vedic* statements, such as, 'The self is atomic', 'The self is like the hundredth part of the hundredth part of a tip of hair' etc. also unambiguously declare, they hold, that the self is atomic. The self described in the scriptures as *vibhu* or ubiquitous is, according to Śrīpati, not the individual self, but the Universal Self.<sup>2</sup>

Further, the *Vedas* regard Brahman as something to be attained by the self. If the self be ubiquitous, Śrīpati argues, it could never attain the Supreme Self which is also ubiquitous, because two ubiquitous entities cannot come in contact with each other. Again, Śrīpati puts forward that if the self were ubiquitous, it would be present in all the bodies, and, consequently, would share experiences with all other selves. In that case, actions and merits and demerits of the individual self would have no causal relation with its experiences. Hence, the self is to be accepted as atomic in magnitude. It is argued by some that the atomic magnitude of the self is not natural, but is caused by the limiting adjunct of *manas* or internal organ. Śrīpati counters that the self, being eternal and unborn, does not depend for its existence upon the internal organ which comes into being after creation. Accordingly, the atomic magnitude of the self must be regarded not as caused by the internal organ but as natural to the self<sup>3</sup>. The peculiarity of Śrīpati's doctrine, however, is this that, though the self is atomic in its bound state, it is revealed as ubiquitous in its liberated state<sup>4</sup>.

Knowledge is both the essence and the essential attribute of the self. The self is therefore both knowledge and knower. Knowledge, being the essential attribute of the self, pertains to it even in the state of liberation. The self is neither unconscious, as the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas hold, nor is it mere knowledge, as the Śāṅkarites maintain. That the self is both knowledge and knower is said to be supported by such *Vedic* passages as, 'The

self is full of knowledge...an internal light', 'Who can know the knower?' 'The self is a seer, hearer, smeller, taster, thinker, doer, knower' etc<sup>5</sup>.

Śrīpati holds that the self is not inactive, as the Sāṃkhyaists hold, but is an active agent. It acquires merits by performing actions enjoined in the *Vedas*, and enjoys the consequent pleasures. Again, it acquires demerits by following the opposite course of actions, and suffers the resulting pains. If the self were not an active agent, it would not be morally responsible for the acts done by itself. Also, the injunctions and prohibitions occurring in the *Vedas* would be meaningless. Again, *Vedic* passages like 'Of the two beautiful birds resting on the same tree, one eats sweet fruits, while the other merely looks on' and others will be contradicted, if the self be regarded as inactive<sup>6</sup>. The Sāṃkhyaists hold that, the self is inactive and that all actions are performed by *buddhi*, the internal organ. Against this, Śrīpati argues that, if it be so, *buddhi* should be admitted to be the experiencer of the fruits of actions, while in the view of the Sāṃkhyaists, it is the self, and not *buddhi*, that is the experiencer of the fruits of actions<sup>7</sup>. And since the self is regarded as the experiencer, Śrīpati asserts, it must be considered as the active agent. The activity of the self is, however, controlled by the will of Īśvara. The self, being unaware of its merits and demerits, cannot bring forth the relevant fruits, while Īśvara, being omniscient and omnipotent, can do so. The will of Īśvara, on its part, is conditioned by the merits and demerits acquired by the self in the past by its free actions<sup>8</sup>.

The self has three states : waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep. In the waking state, the self experiences the external objects with the sense-organs, the motor organs and the mind ; in the dreaming state, it experiences dream-objects with its subtle body ; and in the state of dreamless sleep, it experiences a trace of bliss with its causal body of nescience. A released self goes beyond these three states and attains union with Śiva.

The individual self is under the control of Śiva, the Lord, who is the cause of all the attainments of the self, including its bondage and liberation. Śiva veils the knowledge of the self by his power of *māyā* in the form of bonds. Again, he helps the self destroy this power of *māyā* by the acquisition of the real knowledge of itself and Brahman, and thereby attain liberation. The acquisition of knowledge, the destruction of *māyā*, and the consequent freedom from bondage—all these are effected by Śiva : without his grace, none can destroy *māyā* and attain liberation<sup>9</sup>.

The individual selves are of three kinds, namely, *paśu* or bound, *śūddha* or pure and *mukta* or released. The bound selves are those which are enchanted by the objects of the world of illusion and, accordingly, identify themselves with the mind-body. They have false conceit of 'I', and are devoid of self-control, desire for release and devotion to Śiva. The pure selves are those which are endowed with the qualities of self-control, detachment, desire for release and devotion to Śiva. The released selves are those which have realised Śiva and have merged themselves in the being of Śiva.

The self in its real nature is called *aṅga-sthala*, because it takes resort to Śiva, the Liṅga. *Aṅga-sthala* has three states, namely, *yogāṅga*, *bhogāṅga* and *tyāgāṅga*. *Yogāṅga* leads to absolute bliss and tranquility resulting from the self's *yoga* or complete union with Śiva ; it corresponds to the *prājña*-stage of the empirical self, which is conditioned by the causal body present in deep sleep. *Bhogāṅga* leads to the enjoyment with Śiva ; it corresponds to the *taijasa*-stage of the empirical self, which is conditioned by the subtle body present in the dreaming state. *Tyāgāṅga* leads to the abandonment of the world of illusion ; it corresponds to the *viśva*-stage of the empirical self, which is conditioned by the gross body present in the waking state. Each of these three states is further divided into two. Thus, *yogāṅga* is divided into *aikya* and *śaraṇa* ; *bhogāṅga*, into

*prāṇa-liṅgin* and *prasādin*; and *tyāgāṅga*, into *maheśvara* and *bhakta*<sup>10</sup>.

### The Self and Brahman

The Vīra-Śaivites accept different relations between Brahman and the self corresponding to the different states of the latter. According to them, Brahman is the source of the self, the latter being nothing but Brahman or Siva limited by the *upādhis* of *avidyā* and the five *kañcukas*<sup>11</sup>. When these *upādhis* are removed by *karman* or the performance of duties prescribed in the *śāstras*, and also by *jñāna* or real knowledge of the Supreme Reality, the self is freed from all sorts of worldly bindings, and realises its identity with Śiva<sup>12</sup>.

In the state of bondage, however, the self is regarded as a part of Brahman. The *Śruti* says, 'All creatures are but one quarter of Brahman'. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* also says, 'The selves are eternal parts of the Lord'. The individual self is thus a part of Brahman, just as a ray of light is a part of the luminous body<sup>13</sup>. And, being a part, the bound self is both different from and identical with Brahman, the whole, just as a ray of light is both different from and identical with the luminous body. The bound self is different from Śiva, since it is deluded by ignorance, yet it is non-different from Śiva, because the former cannot exist independently of the latter.

The *Śruti* also admits both identity and difference between Brahman and the self<sup>14</sup>. Thus, the simile of two beautiful birds expresses difference between the self and Brahman, where the self is described as the experiencer of the fruits of its actions and Brahman, as the mere on-looker. Again, Brahman is possessed of unlimited knowledge and power, while the self is endowed with limited knowledge and power. Brahman is independent, while the self is dependent upon it. Brahman is pure and endowed with auspicious qualities, while the self is impure and possessed of inauspicious qualities. Brahman is the controller, while the self is the controlled. Brahman is

the lord of *māyā*, while the self is subjected to *māyā*. Brahman is free from merits and demerits as well as from bondage and liberation, while the self is subject to them. Thus, Brahman and the self are different from each other<sup>15</sup>. There are also passages which speak of identity between the self and Brahman. The *Śruti* says, 'A released self become stain-less and pure, and attains supreme equality with Brahman', 'A released self enjoys all objects of desire with Brahman' and so on<sup>16</sup>. To reconcile both these sets of texts i. e. the difference-texts and identity texts, Śrīpati holds that the self must be regarded as a part of Brahman. He argues that the doctrine of Non-dualism of the Advaitins cannot reconcile these two sets of texts, because it considers some texts to be principal and others to be subordinate or unimportant.

Some hold that, there is natural identity between the self and Brahman, and that the difference spoken of in the *Vedas* is conditional or attributed. This is untenable for Śrīpati, who argues that if the self were naturally identical with Brahman, the latter would not be worshipped by the former. Moreover, in that case, Brahman also would own the faults, sins and pains pertaining to the self. The difference between the self and Brahman cannot be regarded as attributed and caused by nescience. For both the self and Brahman being of the nature of knowledge and, hence, self-luminous, it is not possible for nescience to veil their natures nor to reside in them<sup>17</sup>. Thus, both identity and difference between the self and Brahman must be regarded as natural.

Rāmānuja regards the relations of difference and non-difference as contradictory to each other. He reconciles the two sets of *Śruti*-texts by propounding Qualified Monism according to which, the selves are but qualities of Brahman and are subsumed within the being of Brahman. In the view of Śrīpati, there is no contradiction between difference and non-difference. He argues that just as there is difference in the waking state and non-difference in deep sleep, so there is difference in creation



and non-difference in dissolution<sup>18</sup>. The self in liberation is identical with Brahman, since during that state the self discards its finitude and becomes identical with Brahman, just as rivers discard names and forms and merge in the ocean<sup>19</sup>. The bound self and Brahman are, however, not identical but different from each other, though they are homogeneous in kind. If they were absolutely identical, Brahman would be tainted with the faults of the selves; and if they were absolutely different from each other, then the difference could never be terminated. They must, therefore, be regarded as both different and non-different from each other.

Some Śāṅkarites opine that the individual self is a reflection of Brahman in the individual nescience or in the internal organ. Others hold that the individual self is Brahman limited by individual nescience or by the internal organ. Śrīpati refutes these views thus: (1) The individual self cannot be regarded as a reflection of Brahman in the internal organ of a being. For the original and its reflection cannot co-exist in the same locus, while Brahman is declared by the *Vedas* as residing in the heart of a being. (2) If the individual self be a reflection, it must be false, and such a false self will not be able to perform actions. Further, Vedic statement 'Brahman exists in the individual self as the inner-controller' will become meaningless, if the self be unreal. (3) Since in the state of liberation, the individual nescience and the internal organs are destroyed, the self reflected in them will have to be regarded as destroyed at that time. But the destruction of the individual self cannot be regarded as the summum bonum of life<sup>20</sup>.

In a like manner, if the individual self be a limitation of Brahman by the individual nescience or by the internal organ, then in the state of liberation, the self will have to be regarded as destroyed, since at that time the individual nescience and the internal organs are destroyed. But the destruction of the self cannot be the end of one's spiritual pursuit. Further, if Brahman limited by the insentient internal organ be regarded

as the individual self, then Brahman limited by the insentient jar or cloth might as well be regarded as the individual self<sup>21</sup>. Thus, the theory that the self is a reflection or limitation of Brahman cannot, according to Śrīpati, stand the test of reasoning.

The difference between the self and Brahman is caused, according to the Vira-Śaivites, by limiting conditions or *upādhis* during the state of the self's bondage. In the highest plane of reality or in the state of liberation, the worshipper and the worshipped become identical, both being revealed as Śiva. The self, then, becomes omnipotent, omniscient and ubiquitous, and is endowed with infinite knowledge and bliss<sup>22</sup>. The Vira-Śaivites, thus, maintain identity and difference under two different states of the self's existence. They do not maintain like the Advaita Vedāntins that the distinction between the self and Brahman is an illusion. To the Vira-Śaivites, this distinction is real in the empirical state, but as the self makes progress in its spiritual journey, this distinction gradually vanishes, and at the last stage of this journey, the self realises its identity with Brahman.

The spiritual journey of the self has been divided by the Vira-Śaivites into six stages or *sthalas*, namely, *bhakta-sthala*, *maheśvara-sthala*, *prasādi-sthala*, *prāṇaliṅgi-sthala*, *śaraṇa-sthala* and *aikya-sthala*. The sixth stage or *aikya-sthala* marks the end of the journey. At this stage, the self realises its complete identity with Śiva, merges in him and ceases to exist separately. This is not a state of inseparable union<sup>23</sup>, as the Śaiva-Siddhāntins hold, but one of complete and unqualified identity, without any difference what-so-ever. This state can be expressed neither as existing, nor as non-existing. It is described as a state where there is nothing, or where existence and non-existence are synthesised. In the *Vacana-śāstras*, this state of one-ness or identity or nothingness is called *balayu* or *nirbalaya* or void, because it cannot be expressed in human terms, nor can it be imagined by human



minds. The attainment of this state of one-ness is regarded by the Vira-Śaivites as *mokṣa* or *nirvāṇa*.

Thus, between the self and the Supreme, there is distinction in the beginning, but unity at the end. This idea distinguishes Vira-Śaivism from Advaita-Vedānta which propounds complete identity between the self and the Supreme under all conditions. It is probably because of this fact that Vira-Śaivism is called by Śrīpati as Bhedābheda or Dvaitādvaita i. e. Difference-cum-Identity, and, again, as Viśeṣādvaita or Special Monism, its 'speciality' lying in the fact that there is complete identity between the self and the Supreme after the full realisation of Truth, and not before that<sup>24</sup>.

Further, according to Śrīpati, those who are successful in controlling their internal and external organs, who are completely freed from the desires of sensual pleasures, and who are successful in meditating upon the formless Brahman, merge in it and attain infinite bliss. On the other hand, those who meditate on Brahman with some form, and maintain a desire for unalloyed happiness in the abode of Īśvara, assume pure and luminous spiritual bodies, and attain liberation in the form of residence in the divine land of Īśvara, proximity to him and similarity with him in nature or form. These selves residing in that highest realm also can attain disembodied liberation through meditation on the formless Brahman and merge into its being.

Thus, in the highest form of liberation, the self destroys all the elements of individuality and merges into the Infinite<sup>25</sup>.

## REFERENCES

1. bhedābheda-matam eva svābhipretam—BSŚr, 2. 1. 21 ; bhedābheda-mātām eva sūtrakāra-saṁmatam...*ibid*, 2. 2. 22.
2. jīva 'nūr-eva...BSŚr, 2. 3. 18. vibhūta-śrūtinām paramātma-paratvam iti veditavyam...*ibid*, 2. 3. 18.
3. tasmāt jīvasya aṇutvaṁ svābhāvikaṁ iti niścīyate—*ibid*, 2. 3. 28.
4. muktasya tu parameśvaravat—jīvaṇutvādi-vidhāyaka-śāstraṁ baddha-jīva-viśayakam—*ibid*, 4. 4. 51 ; muktānām vibhūta-vam avirodham—*ibid*, 4. 4. 16.
5. *ibid*, 2. 3. 17 ; 'yo' yam ātmā vijñānamayaḥ—antar-jyotiḥ, 'eṣa hi draṣṭā śrotā ghrātā rasayitā mantā boddha kartā vijñānātmā puruṣaḥ—quoted in *ibid*.
6. ātmaiva kartā—*ibid*, 2. 3. 31 ; jīva-kartṛtva-vidhāyaka-bahu-śrūti-virodhaḥ durnivāraḥ—*ibid*, 2. 3. 34.
7. buddheḥ karaṇatvaṁ kartṛtvaṁ ca na pratipadyate—*ibid*, 2. 3. 33.
8. jīva-kartṛka-puṇya-pāpa-sāpekṣatvāt—*ibid*, 2. 1. 34.
9. tasya pāśa-māyā-tirohitatvaṁ pāśa-mokṣaṁ ca parameśvarāyattatvāt—*ibid*, 3. 2. 4.
10. ṣaḍ-āhur āṅgāni maheśvarasya—*ibid*, 1. 1. 2.
11. cf. sva-śakti-saṁkoca-vikāśātmakatayā brahma kārya-kāraṇa-bhaya-vasthitam—*ibid*, 2. 3. 16.
12. vigalita-mala-traya-pāśa-baddhaḥ san mukta-daśāyām śuddha-jīvaḥ nadi-samdravat paraṁ jyotiḥ upasampadya āvirbhūta-param-jyotir-maya-paraśivaḥ bhavati—*ibid*, 4. 4. 3 ; see *ibid*, 4. 4. 1.
13. jīvaḥ [brahmaṇa] amśaḥ eva—*ibid*, 2. 3. 40 ; prakāśādivat jīvaḥ paramātmanāḥ amśaḥ—*ibid*, 2. 3. 43.
14. bheda bheda-matam eva sūtrakāra-matam...śrūti-smṛti-purāṇāgama-sūtrādiṣu bheda-bheda-pradarśanāt—*ibid*, 2. 1. 22.
15. 'jñāṇau dvāv-ajāv-īśānīśau'...ityādi-śrūtibhiḥ jīva-brahmaṇoḥ paras-para-svabhāva-bheda-vailakṣaṇyaṁ darśitam—*ibid*, 2. 1. 23 ; see also *ibid*, 2. 3. 40.
16. 'nirañjanaḥ paramaṁ sāmyam upaiti', 'so' śnute sarvān kāmān saha'—quoted in *ibid*, 2. 1. 22.
17. svabhāvataḥ svasmāt abhinnasya jīvasya tai-upāśanāsambhavāt...svaprakāśasyaiva svarūpatvāt svarūpa-nivṛttiḥ eveti...*ibid*, 2. 1. 22.
18. jāgrat-svapnāvasthayoḥ bhedaḥ bhaved bhedaṁ abhedaṁ pralaye smṛtam—*ibid*, 2. 1. 22.
19. 'yathā nadyaḥ syaṇāmānāḥ samudra...svabhāva-jīva-bhāvanivṛtti-pūrvaka-śivatva-prāpti-rūpa-kaivalya-vibhūtiś ca—*ibid*, 2. 1. 23.
20. bimba-pratibimbayoḥ ekatra niveśāsambhavāt...jīvasya pratibimbavtena alikatvāt—*ibid*, 1. 1. 2, p. 53.

21. jaḍāntaḥkaraṇāvaccinna-caitanyaśya jīvatvāṅgikāre ghaṭa-paṭāvaccinna-caitanyaśya api jīvatvam upapadyeta—*ibid*, 1. 1. 2.
22. carama-mokṣa-daśāyām...sarva-śakti-satya-jñānānandalakṣaṇa-lakṣitanitya-śuddha-buddha-śivatattva-svarūpeṇa āvirbhavaḥ abhivyakta-svarūpavān bhavati...jīvaḥ śākṣāt sadāśiva-rūpaḥ bhavati...*ibid* 4. 4. 1.
23. prathamē bhakta-sthale nirdiṣṭaḥ...aikya-sthale abhidhiyate—*ibid*, 3. 2. 5; aikya-sthale yathā nady-ādi-śruti-śata-siddha-nadī-samudra-vat jīva-brahmaikyāt-vena advaita-siddhiś ca rāddhāntaḥ—*ibid*, 3. 1. 1.
24. See *ibid*, 2. 1. 22 and 20-21 above.
25. mūrta-paraśiva-brahmaloka-bhoga-vāsanā-yuktānām prāṇīvasāne śivaloka-nivāsocita-divya-maṅgala-vigraheṇa saśarīramuktiḥ bhavati...amūrta-paraśiva-tattvopāsanāyām...muktibhedo na virudhyate—*BSSR*, 3. 4. 52.

## CHAPTER

## 22

## THE SELF IN PRATYABHIJÑĀ ŚAIVISM

## Introduction

The Pratyabhijñā-Śaivism, which is the most important system of the Trika philosophy or Kashmir Śaivism, is a monistic school. According to the general view of this system, Śiva, otherwise called Parama Śiva, is the Absolute. But Abhinavagupta (10th century A. D.) distinguishes the Absolute from Parama Śiva and calls it Anuttara i. e. beyond which there is nothing<sup>1</sup>.

Śiva, the Absolute, is of the nature of *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* i. e. existence, consciousness and bliss<sup>2</sup>. He is eternally endowed with Parā-Śakti or Supreme Power. Accordingly, he is not only consciousness and bliss, but also self-conscious and blissful<sup>3</sup>. Further, he is omnipotent, omniscient, perfect, infinite and all-pervasive.

During the process of the evolution of different principles from Śiva, a principle called *māyā-tattva* comes out after the manifestation of the five pure principles of Śiva-tattva, Śakti-tattva, Sadāśiva-tattva, Īśvara-tattva and Śuddhavidyā-tattva. This *māyā-tattva* is nothing but the non-conscious power of Śiva, which conceals the real nature of Śiva and creates the idea of difference<sup>4</sup>. From *māyā* come forth the five *kañcukas* or coverings : *kāla*, *vidyā*, *rāga*, *kalā* and *niyati*.

## Nature of the Self

According to Pratyabhijñā-Śaivism, Śiva confined by *māyā-tattva* and the five *kañcukas* is the individual self. When Śiva limits his powers with the help of his power *māyā*, his attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, perfection, infinity and all-pervasiveness are manifested as *kalā*, *vidyā*, *rāga*, *kāla*, and *niyati*, respectively. *Kalā* is the cause of the individual self's limited agency; *vidyā* is the cause of its limited knowledge; *rāga* is the love for particular objects; *kāla* is the cause of succession or the temporal order of past, present and future among things; and *niyati* is the principle which regulates the fruition of righteous and unrighteous actions, and connects specific causes to specific effects. These five principles are the effects of *māyā*, and are called *kañcukas* or coverings of the bound self. Abhinavagupta regards *māyā* also as a *kañcuka*<sup>5</sup>. And Parama Śiva assuming the state of a limited knower and doer by covering his nature by *māyā* and the five *kañcukas*, is called *puruṣa* or the individual self. This *puruṣa-tattva* is deluded by *māyā*, is guided by merits and demerits, and is subjected to the cycle of birth and death. This is the bound state of the self<sup>6</sup>. This bound self has limited knowledge, limited action and limited bliss. It is the agent of actions and experiencer of the fruits of those actions. It may be regarded as partly insentient, since it wrongly identifies itself with the insentient elements like the vital forces, the internal organs—*buddhi* or intellect, *manas* or mind, *ahamkāra* or ego etc.—the sense-organs and the body. The bound self is atomic in magnitude and is different indifferent organisms. When in liberation the self realises its real nature, it becomes identical with Śiva, and experiences the world as non-different from itself<sup>7</sup>. The liberated self, being identical with Śiva, is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. Further, during the state of liberation, there is no plurality of the selves, since at that time, the finite selves become one with the Absolute. In other words, in the

transcendental level, the individual selves have no existence, there is only one reality which is *advaita* or non-dual Śiva<sup>8</sup>.

## The Self and Śiva

The self in its real nature is identical with Śiva, the Absolute. It is Śiva who contracts his consciousness and manifestation by his free will, and assumes the nature of a limited knower conditioned by the subtle body composed of subtle elements, such as, the vital forces and the like.

Abhinavagupta holds that the individual self is nothing but the Absolute limited by the six *kañcukas* or coverings, namely, *māyā*, *kalā*, *vidyā*, *rāga*, *kāla* and *nityati*. It is the Absolute that becomes the limited self bound to the embodied life, just as the ubiquitous *ākāśa* becomes limited when enclosed in a jar. When Śiva assumes the power of *māyā*, his powers of omniscience and omnipotence are concealed, and his nature is sullied by the taints called *āṇava-mala*, *māyīya-mala* and *Kārma-mala*,\* all of which are the products of *māyā*. This limited and tainted state of Śiva is the individual self i. e. *puruṣa* or *jīvātman*. The individual or empirical self is called *paśu* since it is limited by the *Kañcukas* or coverings and is bound to the embodied life<sup>9</sup>. Thus, it is Śiva himself who, because of his free will, assumes a self-limitation and becomes the individual self which is a spiritual atom or monad.

Kṣemarāja also holds that the individual self is nothing but

\* *Āṇava-mala* is of the nature of non-apprehension; it conceals the real nature of the individual self—its universal consciousness, bliss and independence. *Māyīya-mala* creates the knowledge of difference, limits the knowledge and agency of the self, and gives rise to the experience of pleasure, pain etc. *Kārma-mala* consists in not knowing Śiva as the only real agent or doer; it makes the individual self an impure empirical knower, and causes it to perform good and bad deeds and experience the fruits thereof.

a contracted state of the Absolute or Parama Śiva who is of the nature of universal consciousness pervading the whole universe. Thus, in its real nature, the self is identical with the Absolute, since universal consciousness is the real nature of the self, as of the Absolute. But during the state of bondage, the nature of the universal consciousness is not manifested because of the power of māyā, as a result of which the self appears to be contracted and atomic in magnitude. In liberation, the power of māyā having been destroyed, the self realises its nature of universal consciousness, and becomes identical with Parama Śiva. The *Spanda-śāstra* says, 'The individual self is identical with Parama Śiva. There is no state in a word, object, or apprehension which is not Śiva'<sup>10</sup>.

An objection may be raised that the individual knower or self cannot be identical with Parama Śiva, because the individual subject is of the nature of differentiated consciousness, while Parama Śiva is of the nature of undifferentiated universal consciousness. Against this, Kṣemarāja says that the individual consciousness in nothing but the universal consciousness: it is the universal consciousness which conceals its real nature, contracts itself by its free will, and descends to the mental plane to apprehend particular objects. And it is this state of the universal consciousness that is called individual consciousness. This individual consciousness is limited by the external objects like jars, cloths etc. as well as by the internal objects like pleasure, pain etc. Now because of the limitations assumed by the Absolute, its powers of knowledge, action and māyā become *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, respectively<sup>11</sup>, in the individual self. The limitations manifested in the individual self and the taints resulting therefrom being thus due to the absolutely free will of Śiva himself, are not to be regarded as extraneous to the universal consciousness.

Thus, according to Pratyabhijñā-Śaivism, it is Parama Śiva who conceals his nature of infinite consciousness, bliss and freedom by his free will, and assumes the state of the limited and

embodied individual self possessing finite knowledge, action and bliss, and experiencing objects through the body and the sense-organs. This is the state of bondage which lies in the non-apprehension of non-difference of the principles from Śiva<sup>12</sup>.

When the self, by pursuing a course of spiritual discipline, destroys all the taints and evils along with their causes, namely, māyā and the *kañcukas*, it experiences all the thirty-six principles as forms of Śiva. It then acquires perfect knowledge and bliss, and realises its identity with the Supreme knower endowed with universal consciousness. Also, it realises its freedom, omniscience and omnipotence and also its authorship of the five-fold cosmic acts. This is the state of liberation which consists in the apprehension of non-difference of the principles from Śiva<sup>13</sup>.

Actually, however, bondage and liberation are nothing but empirical experiences, and have no ontological reality. The self by its very nature is always identical with Parama Śiva, the universal consciousness, and is therefore eternally free. It seems to be bound or limited in knowledge and action, only because of the limitations assumed by Parama Śiva by his free will. Thus, bondage of the self is false; it is neither intrinsic nor extrinsic to the nature of the self. And bondage being false, liberation is also without any reality. Thus, both bondage and liberation are unreal from the transcendental point of view<sup>14</sup>.

It is objected that if the *jīva* be identical with Śiva, all the ideas of worshipper and the worshipped, teacher and the taught and also the means prescribed in the scriptures for the attainment of liberation will be meaningless. To this, Utpaladeva replies that so far as the empirical reality is concerned, these distinctions are not to be denied. The distinction of the selves as well as their reality are denied only from the transcendental point of view<sup>15</sup>.



of *māyā*, his nature is limited by the limiting adjuncts of the five *kañcukas* produced from *māyā*. Śiva under this limited condition is the self<sup>3</sup>. Thus, in its real nature, the self is identical with Śiva. But during bondage, its real nature being veiled by *māyā*, the cosmic nescience, the self cannot realise its identity with Śiva. *Māyā* is a principle of individualisation which limits the omniscience, omnipotence and other powers of Śiva, and creates a knowledge of difference between the *jīva* and Śiva<sup>4</sup>.

*Māyā* in its individual aspect, is called *avidyā* which forms the causal body of the self and fetters in into the world. The self limited by the causal body or *avidyā* is called *prāñña*, that limited by the subtle body, is called *taijasa*, and that limited by the gross body is called *viśva*<sup>5</sup>.

The self is of the nature of pure consciousness. The empirical self or *jīva* is real, atomic in size, and is endowed with limited knowledge and power. It is also a real agent of action and the enjoyer of the fruits thereof. In its real nature, the self is all-pervasive, its atomicity being caused by the limiting adjuncts. Also, it is homogeneous, unborn and immortal; it seems to be undergoing birth and death, only because of its false identification with the mind-body. Again, the self is, in reality, passive; it seems to be active, since the activity of *buddhi* is superimposed on it<sup>6</sup>.

The individual self bound to the embodied life is called *paśu*. Such a self is deluded by ignorance or *avidyā* which is created by *māyā* or cosmic nescience. As a result, it experiences joys and sorrows, according to the merits and demerits arising from its actions. Being veiled by *avidyā*, the self forgets its real nature as the supreme Spirite or Śiva, and is attached to the body and other things related to it, such as, property, the relatives etc. Consequently, the self develops a false sense of egoism in the form of 'I' and 'mine', harbours various desires, and acts to fulfil those desires. The good and bad actions of the self produce merits and demerits, respectively, which are deposited

to the subtle body or *sukṣma-dēha*. By the force of these merits and demerits, the individual self goes to heaven or hell, or is born to this world, and is thus subjected to births and deaths<sup>7</sup>. When *avidyā* or ignorance, the root-cause of bondage, is destroyed by *vidyā* or real knowledge, all the effects arising from *avidyā*, such as, merits, demerits, egoism etc. are also destroyed. As a result, the self becomes free from bondage and the cycle of birth and death. Such a liberated self is absorbed in the Mother Goddess who is non-different from Śiva<sup>8</sup>.

The self is, in reality, only one which is identical with Śakti or Śiva-Śakti. But it appears to be many in different organisms because of *māyā*, just as one *ākāśa* appears to be many, when it is confined by jars, houses and the like, or just as the sun appears to be many, when it is reflected in different locii. In other words, the plurality of the self is only empirical; in the transcendental plane, there is no plurality, since at that plane only Śiva-Śakti exists<sup>9</sup>.

### The Self and Śiva-Śakti

In the state of bondage, the self remains different from Śiva-Śakti, because in this state it becomes limited by its adjuncts, and is tainted by merits and demerits. During dissolution also, the bound self remains in a subtle state in Śakti as non-different from her. In the state of liberation, the self realises its identity with the Supreme Self or Brahman or Śiva-Śakti: it becomes identical with Śiva and also with Śakti. This union of the self with Śiva is known as *yoga*. According to Śāktism, bondage is real, just as liberation is.

The Mother is the ultimate cause of bondage and liberation of the self. Of course, liberation is said to be acquired by *vidyā* arising from *karma* or the performance of duties and *bhakti* or devotion. But all these means—*karma*, *bhakti* and *vidyā*—become operative only by the grace of the Mother.



According to the Śāktists, the self can attain liberation even in its embodied life<sup>10</sup>.

The *Devī Gītā* adopts the Theory of Reflection or Prati-bimba-vāda advocated by a group of Advaitins, and holds that the *jīva* is a reflection of Brahman in *avidyā* or primal nescience. The *Tripura-Tāpanī-Upaniṣad* accepts this Theory of Reflection and also the Theory of Limitation or *Avaccheda-vāda* propounded by another group of Advaitins, according to which the *jīva* is Brahman limited by *avidyā*, just like the *ākāśa* limited by a jar. The *Varāha-Upaniṣad* also holds the view that the *jīva* is Brahman limited by *avidyā*, an effect of *māyā*. It is further held that when this *avidyā* is destroyed by real knowledge, there remains on *jīva*. The *Saubhāgya-Upaniṣad* also holds that when the real knowledge of the self dawns, the self is united with the Supreme Self<sup>11</sup>.

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2. J. N. Sinha, *The Cult of Divine Power*, pp. 47-8.
3. *ibid*, pp. 48-9; Gopinath Kaviraj, *Aspects of Indian Thought* pp. 188-9.
4. Kulārṇava-Tantra, 9. 42; Sinha, *op cit*, p. 40.
5. *Devī-Cītā*, 2. 47-48; 3. 27-28.
6. cf. Sinha, *op cit*, pp. 49-50.
7. *ibid*, p. 40.
8. *Caṇḍī* 1. 52; 4. 9. ii. 3, 7-8.
9. *Tripura tāpanī Up.* 5. 12; see 8 above; nāsti cittam na cāvidyā na mano na ca jīvakāḥ, brahmaivekam—*Annapurnā Up.* 5. 10.
10. Sinha, *op cit*, pp. 123-4.
11. eka eva hi bhūtātmā bhūte bhūte vyavasthi taḥ. ekadhā bahudhā caiva dṛṣyate jala-candravat...ghaṭo niyeta nākāśam tathā jīvo nabhopamaḥ—*Tripura-tāpanī Up.* 5. 12-13; ghaṭākāśo maṭhākāśau mahākāśe pratiṣṭhitau, evaṁ mayi cidākāśe jiveṣau parikalpitau—*Varāha Up.* 2. 50-51; *Saubhāgya-lakṣmī Up.* 14-17.

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